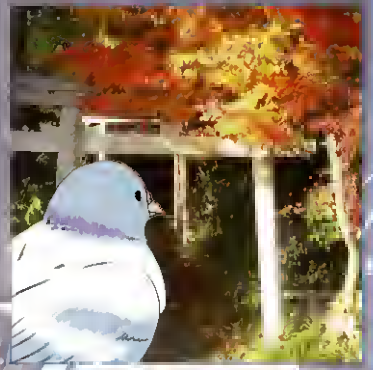

Moa Hato

I am glad to see you once more for the conclusion of the first cycle of Vairocana! The long introduction will finally end with this volume and the serious stuff will begin.

I love traditional Japanese culture, hence why I often visit Kyoto... Speaking of which, the characters I create in my stories are often inspired from Japanese folklore!

氷纏

VAIROCANA

MOA HATO

Vol 3

Les Humanoïdes Associés

3

VAIROCANA

www.global-manga.com Vol 3

Vairocana

After arriving in the Northern Lands, Iska and Tenma finally found the blacksmith able to repair the Yukihira sword, the only weapon effective against the demon Nue. Problem is, there is no more steel! They will have to go search for some in a country with an escalating conflict between humans and specters led by Kiryûshi...

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VAIROCANA

by HATO Moa

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Vairocana 11

Credits

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Translator: Ncrdrg
Proofreader: Deadly_Fang
Cleaner: Jiuyin, Kaizer
Typesetter: Chikage
QC: Fire

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VAIROCANA

Summary of the previous volumes...

The young prince Iska, youngest son of the Imperial Gioh family, madvertently undid the seal keeping the fearsome demon, Nue prisoner. Nue took advantage of his new-found freedom by awakening an evil spirit that was slumbering inside Iska. Nue then killed Iska's father and escaped, which spread fear throughout the human and the specter worlds.

Iska

To rectify his mistake, Iska left towards the Northern Lands to find a blacksmith who could reforge the Yukihira, the only weapon effective against Nue. Tenma, a several millenniums old specter Iska met during his journey, took pity on him and decided to help him.

However, the Yukihira seems to have become greatly sought-after. Right after arriving in the Northern Lands, Iska and Tenma already had to fight Kasha specters, led by the Gehoh clan and their leader Kiryûshi, who seems to have taken a close interest in the sword. And now that have finally found Minamoto, the only blacksmith able to repair it, it turns out that there is no more steel!

Tenma

Kiryûshi

Minamoto

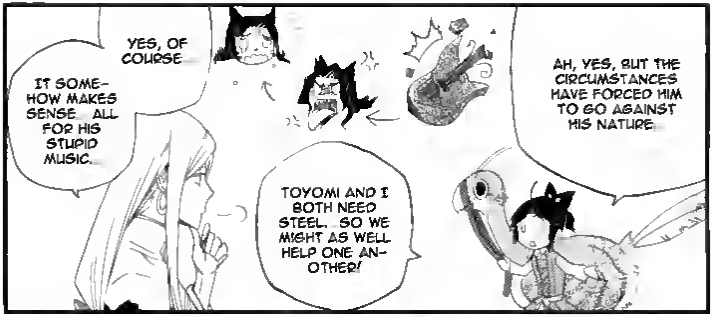
WHAT? THERE IS NO MORE STEEL?
HOW WILL WE REPAIR THE YUKIHIRA WITHOUT ANY STEEL?
IF WE CAN'T FIND A WAY TO SUPPLY STEEL TO MR. MINAMOTO, IT'S ALL OVER!
THAT'S EXACTLY THE PROBLEM!
THE FIRST TIME NUE CAME, 400 YEARS AGO, THE OCEANS WERE RAGING, AS IF NATURE ITSELF WAS ITS ALLY.
...AND NOW THIS STEEL PROBLEM... IT'S AS IF WE ARE CURSED!

HIS NAME IS DIDARA IF YOU GO SEE HIM AND EXPLAIN TO HIM WHAT HAPPENED, HE SURELY COULD SUPPLY YOU WITH SOME STEEL!
THERE IS A BEING WHO COULD HELP YOU... IT'S AN ESPECIALLY TALENTED SPECTER...
DO YOU HAVE A SOLUTION, MR MINAMOTO? BECAUSE I REALLY DON'T
THAT'S NONSENSE! I AM TALENTED! IS THAT BLACKSMITH ALWAYS SO RUDE?
WHAT? AN ESPECIALLY TALENTED SPECTER, HIM??
DIDARA? YOU KNOW HIM, TENMA?
OBTAINING STEEL WILL BE CHILD'S PLAY!
HE HAS A LOT OF INFLUENCE OVER METALS SO IF WE MANAGE TO CONVINCE HIM
OH, A MOUNTAIN GOD WHO COMMANDS ALL MINERALS
BUT WHO IS THIS DIDARA?
UGH!
COME, MANASHI!
OKAY!
LET'S GO!
THE SUN IS STILL HIGH . IF WE LEAVE NOW, WE MIGHT BE BACK BY TONIGHT

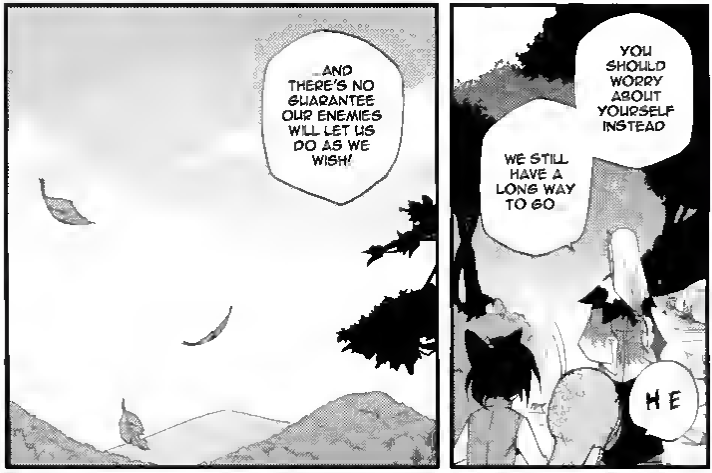
Chapter 11 :
Once upon a time, life was...

YOU WILL HEAD TOWARDS DIDARA'S MOUNTAIN?
I ASSUME THIS WILL BE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT?
YES... BUT IF EVERYTHING GOES WELL, WE SHOULD BE BACK BY TONIGHT
ISKA WILL COME WITH ME BUT YOU WILL STAY HERE.
UNDERSTOOD. I WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH OVER THE YUKIHIRA.
BE CAREFUL!
SEE YOU!
BY THE WAY, THERE IS SOMETHING BOTHERING ME...

THE SACRED TREE? OH YES, TOYOMI TOLD ME ABOUT IT. HE ALREADY LEFT TO SEARCH FOR IT, JUST IN CASE...
IF MY MEMORY IS CORRECT, CREATING THE YUKIHIRA REQUIRED USING THE SACRED TREE.
...IT'S STRANGE THAT WE DON'T NEED THE TREE TO REPAIR IT...
TOYOMI?
AH...
WHY SHOULD I COOPERATE IN THESE DIFFI-CULT TIMES?
THAT'S ODD. HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE TYPE TO HELP HUMANS...


YES, OF COURSE...
IT SOME-HOW MAKES SENSE... ALL FOR HIS STUPID MUSIC...
TOYOMI AND I BOTH NEED STEEL. SO WE MIGHT AS WELL HELP ONE AN-OTHER!
AH, YES, BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE FORCED HIM TO GO AGAINST HIS NATURE...

DON'T WORRY THE SACRED TREE'S FOREST IS CLOSER THAN THE WATER'S GATE BESIDES, HE WON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH NASTY CREATURES
ANYWAY... TOYOMI LEFT ON HIS OWN TO SEARCH FOR THE SACRED TREE. I HOPE EVERYTHING WILL GO WELL FOR HIM...


...AND THERE'S NO GUARANTEE OUR ENEMIES WILL LET US DO AS WE WISH!
YOU SHOULD WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF INSTEAD
WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO...
HE

TE...
TENMA...
WAIT FOR ME JUST A BIT LONGER...
IDIOT!
YOU'RE MAKING TOO MUCH NOISE! IF YOU CONTINUE LIKE THAT, WE'LL BE EATEN BY FISH WARRIORS BEFORE NUE CAN EVEN FIND US!
YOU YOU'RE GOING A BIT TOO FAST
HOW CAN YOU WALK SO QUICKLY DRESSED LIKE THAT??
HE
HUFF
HUFF

IF I WASN'T DRAGGING THIS BURDEN, I WOULD BE MOVING FASTER BUT, I DO NEED HIM
I'LL TRY NOT TO BECOME A BURDEN!
..SORRY!
SO .
CATCH UP WITH US OVER THERE, I'LL CONTINUE ALONE WITH ISKA
UHE
MANASHI, THERE'S A CAVE BEHIND THAT WATERFALL. IT WAS DUG UP LONG AGO... FEW PEOPLE KNOW OF ITS EXISTENCE...
HE HE
WHY CONTINUE WITHOUT MANASHI?
WHAT...
GRAB

HUH???
AM
TOMP
TH

TENMA!
HUMAN BEINGS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO FLY LIKE THAT!
WE'LL GO FAST THANKS TO THIS
STOP COMPLAINING, THERE WON'T BE ANY TRANSPORT FEE.
I WANT TO BE BACK TO THE WATER'S GATE WITHIN THE DAY, AS PLANNED.
SO, WE'LL TAKE A FEW SHORTCUTS.
COME HERE, ISKA.
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SHOW YOU.
TO.. TO ME?
WHAT? WE'RE FLYING AGAIN?
FWP

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT.
ADMIRE IT... THIS VALLEY HASN'T CHANGED IN OVER A THOUSAND YEARS. EVERY FALL, THE LEAVES FALL AND MAKE IT LOOK AS IF THE SKY WAS SET ABLAZE...
...AND THAT VALLEY WAS COVERED WITH AN ETERNAL CRIMSON VEIL.

WHOOAA! SO MANY SHADES OF RED...
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
THE RIVER CONTINUES ENDLESSLY AND THERE IS NO SOURCE
FOR THE PAST THOUSAND YEARS, WHENEVER FALL COMES THIS SCARLET VEIL COVERS THE VALLEY
IT HAS NEVER LOST ITS ESSENCE AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO INCREDIBLE
IT'S A STRANGE THING FOR A BEAUTY OF NATURE TO BE THERE FOR SO LONG AND YET REMAIN UNKNOWN TO THE HUMAN EYE

UHH... WELL. I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT.
ISKA?
WHAT DOES A HUMAN LIKE YOU FEEL WHEN SEEING A SIGHT LIKE THIS?
EVEN THOUGH I'VE LIVED FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS AND SEEN THOUSANDS OF THINGS...
...YOU SHOULD FEEL THE SAME THING THAT I DO.
TENMA, WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?
HUH? WHY IS THAT?
BECAUSE SUCH BEAUTY IS UNIVERSAL AND ETERNAL. BUT THE MOMENTS FOR US TO CONTEMPLATE IT ARE MINIMAL AND FLEETING

ONE MOMENT, A SINGLE ENCOUNTER, IS ALL IT TAKES...
...FOR IT TO BE THE LAST TIME I EVER GAZE AT THIS FANTASTIC SIGHT
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT COULD HAPPEN, ESPECIALLY IN SUCH TROUBLED TIMES. THERE MIGHT NOT EVER BE A NEXT TIME.
THAT'S WHY EVERY SINGLE MOMENT I PASS HERE, I TRY TO ENGRAVE THIS SIGHT WITHIN MYSELF...
...SO THAT I CAN NEVER FORGET IT. SPECTERS AREN'T INVINCIBLE, YOU KNOW...
...AND JUST BECAUSE WE ARE SPECTERS DOES NOT MEAN WE ARE IMPERVIOUS TO SUCH BEAUTY.

WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE THAT?
IT'S LIKE I TOLD YOU I CANNOT KNOW IF I WILL BE ALIVE DURING THE NEXT YEAR
NO...
AND IT ISN'T LIMITED ONLY TO THIS SIGHT... YOU MUST KNOW HOW TO SAVOUR EVERY THING.
CHILD, KNOW THAT TIME FLIES QUICKLY AND WILL WAIT FOR NO ONE
YOU SEE, THIS PANORAMA APPEARING RIGHT NOW BEFORE MY EYES
MAKES MY HEART BLEED WITH ITS BEAUTY AND THIS STAYS TRUE EVERY TIME I COME HERE

WHEN YOUR DOUBLE (YOU KNOW, THE PARASITE) AWAKENS AND TAKES YOUR PLACE, DOES IT PRODUCE WATER?
ANYWAY... ENOUGH POESY.
WHILE WE WAIT FOR MANASHI, I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU... IT'S CRUCIAL FOR YOU TO ANSWER THEM
THE ONLY LINK IT EVER HAD WITH WATER WAS DURING MY MOTHER'S DEATH
WELL, IT'S STILL NOT QUITE CLEAR...
...BUT I DON'T THINK IT DOES
YOU KNOW, ISKA... AFTER SOMETHING LIKE THAT, IT'S NORMAL FOR YOUR BROTHER TO BE MORE DISTANT
APPARENTLY, I WENT OUT ONE NIGHT AND ALMOST DROWNED MY MOTHER SAVED ME BUT DID NOT SURVIVE
SINCE THEN, MY OLDER BROTHER NEVER LOOKED AT ME THE SAME WAY, EVEN THOUGH HE DEFENDED ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS

YES, I KNOW. THAT'S WHY I WANT TO KILL NHE. AND WHEN IT'S DONE...
...I WILL RETURN TO THE PALACE AND FACE MY DESTINY.
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO THE NON-SENSE YOU'RE SAYING?!
YOU ARE PESSIMISTIC AND YOU HAVE NO FAITH IN YOUR-SELF. TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF! YOU'RE AFRAID OF EVERYTHING! BEING AFRAID TO FAIL IS ONE THING BUT YOU'RE EVEN AFRAID TO LIVE!
YOU MUST ONLY BE AFRAID OF DEATH!
AND THAT DOESN'T MAKE YOU WEAK!

I THINK THAT I WILL CERTAINLY FIND A BETTER REASON TO LIVE AFTER MUCH THOUGHT
I'M AFRAID TO DIE BUT I MUST STILL TAKE RESPONSI-BILITY
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT
THAT MEANS YOU HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT?
WHAT'S WITH THAT CRAPPY ANSWER?
YES, BUT...
...I THINK THE REASON WHY I AM HERE RIGHT NOW IS TO UNDERTAKE THIS QUEST, THIS
...THIS ISN'T JUST TO OVERCOME MY DEEPEST FEARS

TENMA...
...I'M AFRAID OF SOMETHING ELSE MORE SO THAN FAILURE, DEATH, OR EVEN NUE. WHAT TERRIFIES ME THE MOST IS...
...TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING WHY I CAME TO THIS WORLD
BY RUNNING AWAY LIKE THIS, EVEN IF I MANAGED TO CONTINUE LIVING, I DISTANCED MYSELF FROM THOSE ANSWERS.
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I MIGHT DIE WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT KIND OF PERSON I REALLY AM.
THAT TERRIFIES ME AND THAT ANXIETY IS GROWING STRONGER AND STRONGER... I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE THINKING LIKE THAT.
EH, NOW, THAT'S A SURPRISE!
IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE HUMANS LOST THEIR SENSE OF MORALITY... AND THAT IS WHAT DRIVES THEM TO SUICIDE
BUT YOU, YOU'RE THE KIND TO TRY TO HOLD ON TO IT, EVEN AT THE RISK OF YOUR OWN LIFE.

BUT...
...THAT ISN'T A BAD ANSWER.
YOU MUST FEEL BETTER NOW... RIGHT?
WHAT I MEAN IS THAT SIMPLY TALKING ABOUT THIS WILL DISPERSE THIS ANXIETY THAT IS EATING YOU AND WILL MAKE YOU STRONGER
ISKA, YOU NEED TO APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FACE YOUR GREATEST FEAR
AN UNKNOWN SUFFERING WILL OFTEN DRIVE MEN TO SUICIDE A KNOWN ONE WILL DRIVE THEM TO FACE IT.

YOU WILL COME OUT OF IT A BETTER MAN AND YOU WILL HAVE FACED YOUR GREATEST FEAR AND NEUTRALIZED NUE
DON'T WORRY
YOUR QUEST IS WORTH UNDERTAKING
IF YOUR WILLPOWER DOES NOT WEAKEN, YOU WILL NEVER BE ALONE AND YOU WILL NEVER FAIL. WITH THE PARASITE, YOU ARE MUCH STRONGER THAN YOU THINK YOU'LL SEE, YOU WILL EVEN SURPRISE YOURSELF
AND BESIDES, I'M ALSO HERE I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU IN THIS ADVENTURE AND I WILL HELP YOU TO TAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS
I WILL BE ALWAYS BE AT YOUR SIDE AND WILL NEVER ABANDON YOU

YES
THANK YOU

UHE

WE'LL ARRIVE TO THE SUMMIT SOON
WHOOOAAA! IT'S REALLY HIGH! I CAN'T BELIEVE WE COVERED SO MUCH GROUND!
AS SOON AS WE ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVE, WE'RE GOING BACK

HE MUST HAVE BEEN THERE FOR ABOUT 300 YEARS, I THINK...
HMM...
HAS OIDARA BEEN LIVING HERE FOR LONG?
SO THAT MEANS HE WAS ABLE TO SEE THE RED VEIL ATOP THE VALLEY 300 TIMES!
THAT OIDARA SURE IS LUCKY!
WAIT... MANASHI...
WAIT!
YOU CAN'T EAT GRASS ON THE SIDE OF ROAD!
COME ON, MAKE AN EFFORT AND BE PATIENT.

WE JUST ATE BREAKFAST!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
OH... A RIVER! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO FIND ONE HERE
WHAT IS THIS...?
ICE?

!!!
TENMA!
SOMEONE'S INJURED!

HE'S BLEEDING!
WE HAVE TO HELP HIM!
A HUMAN...
A HUMAN INSIDE A MOUNTAIN STREAM? IN SUCH A REMOTE PLACE?
HANG IN THERE!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
WHAT... A HUMAN BEING?!

SWIFT
WHAT... WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?! I JUST WANTED TO HELP!!!
DIE!!!

MM
DO
ISKA, GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF AND LEARN FROM THIS
GH...
MOST OF ALL, DO NOT APPROACH HIM.
IN THIS WORLD, SPECTERS OFTEN TAKE A HUMAN APPEARANCE MAKE SURE TO REMEMBER THAT NEXT TIME

WHERE ARE YOU FROM? WHAT DO YOU HAVE AGAINST ISKA TO ATTACK HIM SO TREACHEROUSLY?
AND YOU, MONSTER, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
I DON'T SEE WHY I SHOULD ANSWER YOU. BESIDES, LOOK AT YOURSELF BEFORE CALLING ANYONE ELSE A MONSTER!
LET ME GO... OR I SWEAR I WILL CUT OFF YOUR ARM.

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VAIROCANA

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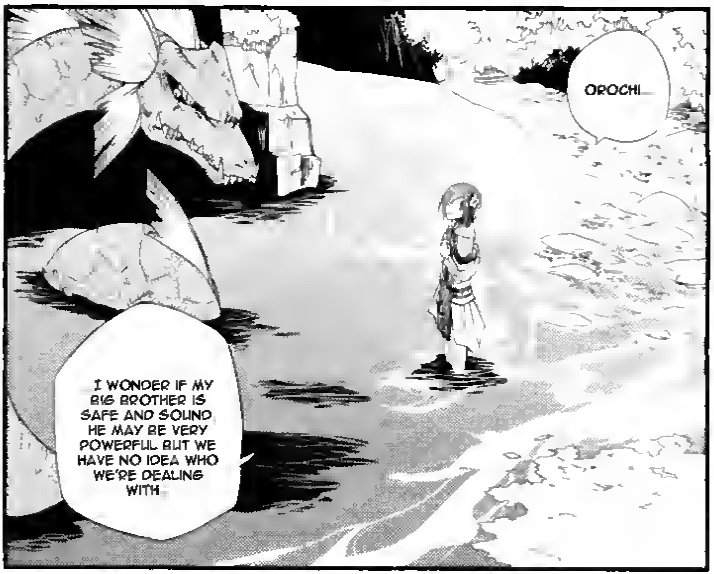
DON'T WORRY, WE'LL END UP FINDING HIM SOMEHOW.
NOTHING
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING OVER HERE EITHER
HE MUST HAVE GONE DOWNSTREAM, AT LEAST HALFWAY DOWN THE RIVER
THIS ISN'T FAMILIAR TERRITORY, NEITHER FOR KIRYUSHI NOR US. SO IT'S PRETTY HARD TO FIGURE OUT WHERE WE ARE
OH, REALLY?
THAT MEANS MY BIG BROTHER MIGHT HAVE FINALLY GOTTEN LOST!

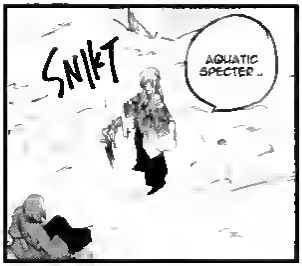
WHAT WORRIES ME IS THAT WE ALSO LOST CONTACT WITH TETSU I WONDER WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM AFTER ALL, THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE VERY STRONG
BUT ANYWAY, WE'D BETTER NOT COME OUT FROM THE SHADOWS TOO MUCH


OROCHI
I WONDER IF MY BIG BROTHER IS SAFE AND SOUND HE MAY BE VERY POWERFUL BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHO WE'RE DEALING WITH

Chapter 12 :
The Burden of Shame

HMH
I SPENT TOO MUCH POWER TO BUILD THE ICE WALL EARLIER
THE ICE ISN'T FREEZING FAST ENOUGH

YOU DO NOT WISH TO GIVE US YOUR NAME
SO I WILL GIVE YOU ONE RIGHT NOW


SNIKT
AQUATIC SPECTER..

YOU ARE THE HEAD OF THE KASHA AND YOU ARE FROM THE GEHOH CLAN
SO, LOGICALLY, YOUR NAME SHOULD BE KIRYÛSHI. YOU COMMAND WATER, ICE AS WELL AS THE FISH WARRIORS
AND YOU ARE THE ONE WHOSE BEEN THROWING A WRENCH INTO OUR PLANS SINCE THE VERY START

...IS HIDING UNDER THIS DECEPTIVE APPEARANCE... YOU JUST CAN'T HELP MEDDLING INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS, HUH?
OH, A MEMBER OF THE TENMA CLAN...
DOES THAT MEAN OTHER SPECTERS HAVE A GRUDGE AGAINST ME?
TENMA...
WE SHOULD BE THE ONES SAYING THAT WE DID WARN YOU BEFORE...
NOT TO START PLOTTING AGAIN AND NOT TO FIGHT WITHOUT CONSULTING THE OTHER CLANS
GENERAL SUZAKU?
ACCORDING TO FOREIGN NEWS, A CLAN LEADER FOUGHT AGAINST GENERAL SUZAKU ALONGSIDE THE KARASU RIVER AND HE DISAPPEARED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHT...
BUT I HEARD A STRANGE STORY...

IN OTHER WORDS...
YOU SUFFERED A CRUSHING DEFEAT AND YOU RAN LIKE A COWARD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHT
THAT'S FALSE!
THAT WAS A STRATEGIC RETREAT!
HE'S NOT REALLY WITH ME. I'M JUST ACCOMPANYING HIM AS LONG AS I HAVE TO
TENMA, THE CHILD THAT IS WITH YOU...
WOULDN'T BY ANY CHANCE BE THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUZAKU SIOH?
THAT IS QUITE REGRETTABLE TO BE THE EMPEROR'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND WANDERING AROUND LIKE A RONIN...
KIRYÛSHI, WHY DO YOU WANT TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE YUKIHIRA AT ANY COST? DO YOU THINK THAT WILL MAKE THE SEHOH CLAN WIN THIS RIDICULOUS WAR?
BY THE WAY, DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO MOURN? YOUR FATHER DIED NOT TOO LONG AGO AND YOUR BROTHER IS ALREADY ON THE WARPATH...

NO ONE AMONGST THE GEHOH WANTED TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN THIS!
YES. WELL, HUMANS WERE THE FIRST TO START THIS FIGHT!
OF OUR WAR WITH HUMANS WE HAVE A MORAL PACT...
WE ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO INTERVENE IN HUMAN MATTERS...
WHAT FIGHT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THE APPEARANCE UNDER WHICH WE HIDE OURSELVES PREVENTS YOU TO UNDERSTAND A FEW THINGS...
YOUNG BROTHER OF SUZAKU GIOH.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE PEACE BETWEEN SPECTERS AND HUMANS BUILT BY YOUR OWN FAMILY IS QUITE FRAGILE

YOU RAZED FORESTS TO EXPAND YOUR CITIES, DEVASTATING EVERYTHING IN YOUR PATH
THE HUMAN POPULATION KEEPS INCREASING..
WHILE WE FIND OURSELVES TO BE IN FEWER AND FEWER NUMBERS, WHICH WIDENS THE GAP BETWEEN OUR TWO PEOPLES
YOU HAVE STAINED MANY RIVERS TO BUILD YOUR TOOLS.
THIS BRUTALITY KNOWS NO BOUNDS, NOR DOES YOUR CUPIDITY AND YOUR BARBARITY
WILL YOU EVER BE SATISFIED OR WILL YOU CONTINUE TO OPPRESS US ENDLESSLY?

...YOU CARRIED OUT A DESPICABLE EXPERIMENT, POISONING THE RIVERS OF OUR MOUNTAINS.
AND THAT'S NOT ALL... ON THE WEST BANK OF WHERE WE LIVED..
IT WAS A COMPLETE SLAUGHTER IT HAS NOW BEEN..
19 YEARS SINCE THEN AND I WILL NEVER FORGET IT
WASN'T IT THE JOB OF YOUR FATHER TO SUPPORT THIS MILITARIST GROUP?
DID YOUR BROTHER NOT PARTICIPATE IN THOSE DISASTERS?

MY FATHER WAS AN INCREDIBLE MAN, EVERYONE KNOWS THAT...
EVEN MY BROTHER WOULD NEVER DO THAT...
LIES...
THIS IS ALSO THE FIRST TIME I HAVE HEARD OF THIS
IF THAT WAS TRUE, THE IMPERIAL HOUSE, WHICH HAS NO ENEMIES WORTHY OF THE NAME WOULD HAVE BECOME A LEGITIMATE THREAT...
...WHY WOULD THEY TAKE SO MUCH RISK TO CARRY OUT THIS EXPERIMENT?
IDIOT!!
THE MOST DISTURBING FACTS ARE ALWAYS THE MOST SECRET ONES!
THOSE MISERABLE HUMANS HAVE NEVER STOPPED PERSECUTING US!

HFF...
YOU TRY TO KILL US, LITTLE BY LITTLE.
MEANWHILE, WE SUFFER IN SILENCE
WH A
BUT WE WILL SURVIVE!
BY ALLYING OURSELVES WITH NUE, WE WILL RESTORE ORDER AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO ANNIHILATE THE HUMAN WORLD!

MOVE OUT OF THE WAY, TENMA
THE BEASTS WHO WERE SACRIFICED WILL THEN BE AVENGED.
IN THE END, THE HEAD OF ONE MEMBER OF THE GIOH DYNASTY WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR ME.
KIRYŪSHI, YOU ARE BECOMING QUITE TROUBLE-SOME.
THE WOUNDED DOG IS BARKING QUITE A BIT.
HMM.
GET BACK, ISKA.
YOU WILL DIE HERE. THAT WAY, WE WON'T HAVE TO SEE YOUR UGLY MUG ONCE AGAIN.

WAIT...
...YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO KILL HIM.

WHAT THE HELL...
!!!
...DO YOU WANT...
KRAK
...ISKA?!
SPLASH

WHY, TENMA?
BECAUSE HE REALLY HOLDS A GRUDGE AGAINST THE HUMAN CITIES.
WHILE WE, THE TENMA CLAN DESPERATELY DEFEND THEM
KAFF
BESIDES, WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
THE MIGHTY WILL CRUSH THE WEAK. WEAKLINGS WILL ALWAYS BE EATEN.
IT ALWAYS COMES DOWN TO THAT, ANYWAY...
YOU THOUGHT LIVING AMONGST HUMANS SOFTENED ME UP?
EVEN MY YOUNGER SISTER ISN'T THAT WEAK!
GLARE

THAT WOULD BE A GOOD THING!!!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO UNDER-STAND WHAT THE WEAK FEELS LIKE?!
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON!
EVEN IF I WAS BANNED FROM THE GIOH FAMILY...
IF MY FATHER DID SUCH CRUEL THINGS, HE SURELY MUST HAVE HAD A REASON!

DOWN
OPEN YOUR EYES AND STOP LYING TO YOURSELF!
AGH...!
STOP GETTING EXCITED AND STOP WHINING!
WHAT DO YOU SEEK BY GOING AGAINST ME?! WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO CONVINCE?!

LISTEN CAREFULLY
THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU, BECAUSE I WILL NOT REPEAT MYSELF!
TENMA YOU'RE HURTING ME
IF YOU HOLD NO CONVICTION, YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD
BUT IF YOU ARE ONLY MOTIVATED BY A SINGLE CONVICTION, YOU WILL NEVER CHANGE ANYTHING. THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE
NOT ONLY ARE YOU INCOMPETENT, YOU ARE ALSO POWERLESS
YOU LET YOURSELF BE THROWN INTO DISARRAY BY THINGS THAT ARE BEYOND YOUR GRASP, WITHOUT EVEN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THEM

IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT WE'RE BACK TO SQUARE ONE.
TENMA...
I...
THE OPPORTUNITY TO CRUSH THE KASHA AND THE GEHOH CLAN HAS EVAPORATED LIKE MORNING DEW.

HE'S REALLY IRRITATED. I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS BEFORE
WHAT SHOULD I DO? HE'S BEEN STUBBORNLY IGNORING ME SINCE EARLIER
TENMA. I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT
SHUT UP!
UMM. TENMA?
SHUT UP!
WHATEVER I SAY, I'M SURE TO GET EATEN ALIVE
HOW SHOULD I APOLOGIZE?
MUNCH MUNCH
SORRY FOR EARLIER

YOU HAVE NO REASON TO FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT YOUR FAMILY DID.
IF I ABANDONED MY HOME, THAT'S BECAUSE I...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING ANYMORE
WHAT INTERESTS ME IS ONLY OTHER PEOPLE'S SUFFERING.
THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM. I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT GUY'S ACCUSATIONS.
KNOW OTHER PEOPLE'S SUFFERINGS AND YOU WILL BECOME EVEN STRONGER.
THAT'S WHAT I WAS TOLD 400 YEARS AGO... BY SOMEONE VERY MUCH LIKE YOU.
I REALLY WONDER WHY HE SAID THAT BACK THEN... CONSIDERING WHAT HE DID NEXT.

Hwoooo
DIDARA!
WE URGENTLY NEED STEEL!
PROTECTIVE GOD OF THE MOUNTAINS, WE CAME THIS FAR BECAUSE WE HAVE A REQUEST.
...I will offer you the steel you seek.
Tenma, it's been a while since you've come here! What a pleasure to see you again...

DOMM
ZZT..
ROLLL
ROLLL
!
THU

DON'T BE STUPID
MR. DIDARA IS INSIDE THAT TREE?
A TREE?
WHOA!
YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING RIGHT AT HIM THE ENTIRE TIME
THIS MOUNTAIN IS DIDARA'S BODY

THE ENTIRE MOUN-TAIN?!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! YOU JUST SAVED OUR LIVES!
MR. DIDARA!

HE
BY THE TIME WE'RE BACK, IT'LL ALREADY BE NIGHT...
THAT'S RIGHT, WE TOOK TOO MUCH TIME

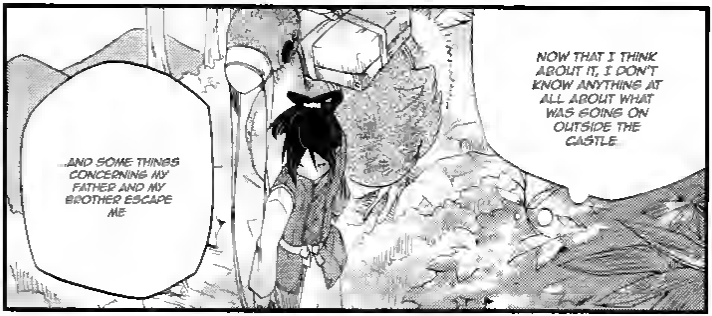
ALRIGHT
WE HAVE WASTED A LOT OF TIME

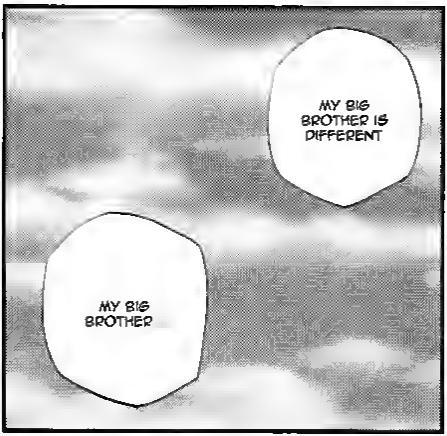
I'LL GO AHEAD OF YOU
YOU'LL WALK ALL THE WAY BACK
ISKA
HE!
CALM DOWN, MANASHI!
I BEG YOU, PLEASE DON'T MIMIC HIM! DON'T LEAVE ME BY MYSELF!
WHAAAAAAAAAAAAT!!!!!?!
ARE YOU CRAZY?!
TMP
CLEARLY, I'M IN A WORLD OF TROUBLE NOW

IN THIS LOWLY WORLD, LIARS ARE APLENTY
....

THAT GUY KIRYŪSHI
HE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE LYING

THAT BEING SAID....


NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON OUTSIDE THE CASTLE.
...AND SOME THINGS CONCERNING MY FATHER AND MY BROTHER ESCAPE ME


MY BIG BROTHER IS DIFFERENT
MY BIG BROTHER

QUICK...
I MUST HEAD BACK QUICKLY
TAP
HUF
HUF
EVEN IF WE FIGHT HIM HEAD ON, SUZAKU WILL DEFEAT US THANKS TO THE SIZE OF HIS ARMY
HOW CAN I WIN?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
MERCY...
A YOUNG LEADER, INSIDE A RIVER
BUT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, I NEED TO RESORT TO MY HIGH SPECTER POWERS
WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND, THE EXPERIENCE GAP BETWEEN TENMA AND I IS MINIMAL. IN A REAL DUEL I COULD DEFEAT HIM

I AM COVERED WITH DIRTY MUD AND I CURSE THE HUMAN WORLD
THIS IS HUMILIATING, THIS IS HUMILIATING, YOU ARE OF NO CHALLENGE
ARE YOU MOCKING ME? WHO ARE YOU?
WHY SHOULD YOU CARE IF I'M MOCKING YOU?
CUT OUT YOUR NONSEN
WHY DO YOU THINK I'M HERE? I CAME TO HELP YOU

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by HATO Moa

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Vairocana 13

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HEY, YOU AIN'T STUPID, BOY! YOU'RE NOT VERY RESOURCEFUL BUT YOU'VE GOT POTENTIAL.
ON THE OTHER HAND, WHENEVER I LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR 5 MINUTES, YOU MANAGE TO GET YOURSELF IN TROUBLE
IT'S TRUE I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH
YOU EVEN MANAGED TO ARGUE WITH THAT SHE-MALE! AND THE WORST PART IS YOU KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CHANCE OF WINNING

REGARDLESS..
HUH?
IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THAT SIMPLE TENMA ISN'T VERY GENTLE WITH CHILDREN
IF YOU HAD WOKEN ME UP, I WOULD HAVE SLASHED HIS HEAD IN.
IN THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS, MY WORDS AREN'T CREDIBLE. THEY LACK POWER AND SENSE.
THERE IS A CERTAIN LOGIC TO TENMA'S ATTITUDE..
...WHETHER IT'S JUST OR NOT IS NOT THE QUESTION.
OKAY
ALRIGHT NOW, CIAO, GOOD NIGHT!
YEAH, YOU DON'T NEED ME ANYMORE ANYWAY. I'M GOING BACK TO SLEEP.
WAKE ME UP WHEN YOU NEED ME. BUT MAKE SURE YOU DON'T NEED ME RIGHT AWAY.

Chapter 13: Combat

YOU TWO ARE FINALLY BACK!
AH...
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU'RE COVERED WITH WOUNDS FROM HEAD TO TOE!
I ONLY ASKED YOU TO CUT A TREE! WHAT HAPPENED?
YEAH, WELL, IT WASN'T MUCH BETTER FOR ME. I'M DEAD TIRED.
TENMA DITCHED US AND I HAD TO TRAVEL ALL THE WAY BACK ON MY OWN.

Half a day earlier, inside the Oshira-sama forest, near Minato
WHO ARE YOUUUUUU ?
I AM TOYOMI A KYOUSHIN NEKOMATA"
YOU ARE OSHIRA-SAMA, THE GREAT SAGE OF THIS FOREST?
HUH?
A SAGE? YES THE GREATEST? I DON'T KNOW
OSHIRA-SAMA IS INDEED MY NAME. THERE IS NO ONE ELSE GOING BY THAT NAME IN THIS FOREST.
OSHIRA-SAMA.
I HAVE A REQUEST.

TL NOTE: IN JAPANESE FOLKLORE, A NEKOMATA IS A CAT WITH SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES WHOSE TAIL HAS FORKED IN TWO

OSHIRA-SAMA I WANT TO GO BACK...
THAT'S NOT POS-SIBLE
BUT THE SUN JUST SET
IMPOSSIBLE YOU SAID YOU WOULD PLAY WITH MY TREE IN EXCHANGE
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT, I'VE GOT A LIFE!
I HAVE NO REASON TO PLAY IN A PLACE LIKE THIS
NO ONE
WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THIS FOREST.
SO, I...
NO ONE EVER COMES
I GOT IT, DON'T CRY! DON'T CRY, I'LL PLAY WITH YOU.

WITHOUT THE SACRED TREE I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REPAIR YOUR MUSICAL INSTRUMENT
HOWEVER IT MAY BE, DETERMINATION IS MY BEST QUALITY!
WELL, AT LEAST, YOU MADE A FRIEND
AND THAT'S WHY I CAME BACK REALLY LATE.
HAS MY HOUR OF GLORY FINALLY COME?
BAM
BAM
WELL PLAYED, LITTLE GENIUS.
THAT HURTS, THAT HURTS!
UHH.
YES I'VE GOT WHAT YOU NEED
SO, LITTLE GENIUS, DID YOU MANAGE TO RECOVER SOME STEEL?
AS FOR THE KATANA IT WON'T BE AN EASY FEAT
ALRIGHT, I'LL DEAL WITH THE MOST URGENT ONE, THE BASS
COME BACK TO VISIT ME IN 2 OR 3 DAYS.

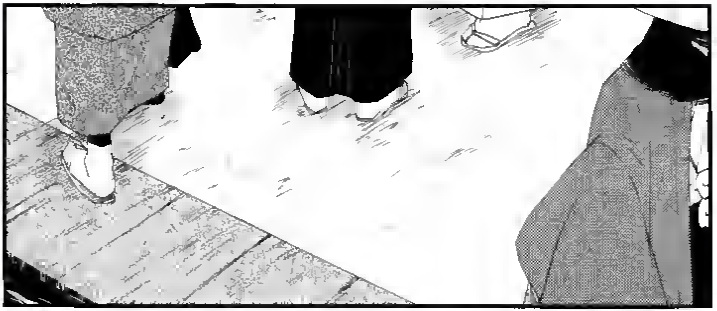
WE ARE THE NEKOMATA GROUP, WE TRAVEL THROUGH THE ARCHIPELAGO WITH OUR KAGURA MUSIC!
GOOD EVENING, EVERYONE!
TODAY IS OUR LAST CONCERT! SO, ALL OF YOU HUMANS AND SPECTERS, THROW YOUR HEARTS AND SOULS INTO MUSIC!
WE WILL START OFF WITH OUR GREATEST HITS!
WHOA...
THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE.
IT ALREADY STARTED, TENMA

SO, GUYS, ARE YOU READY TO THROW THE HOUSE ON FIRE???
IT'S THE FINAL SPRINT, SO JUMP AS MUCH AS YOU CAN! A STRONG WAVE IS COMING AND YOU CAN'T AVOID IT!
YAAAAA!
IT'S HUGE!

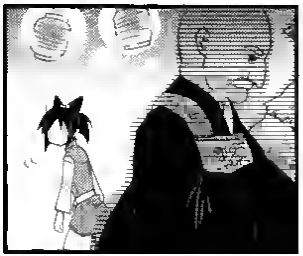
I FEEL AS IF PART OF MY SOUL WAS DEVOURED
I'M STILL IN SHOCK. I DON'T KNOW WHY EXACTLY BUT I'M STAGGERED.
AMAZ-ING!
THAT WAS REALLY AMAZING!
BUT WELL... IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL DIE. JUST THAT YOU LOSE QUITE A BIT
IT WAS MAGNIFI-CENT...
HUMANS' LIFE ENERGY IS THEIR FOOD
ACTUALLY, TO BE HONEST, A PART OF YOUR SOUL WAS DEVOURED.
THAT WAS A GOOD MEAL...
AND YOU ALSO EAT YOUR FILL INTELLECTUALLY. SO, THERE'S A MUTUAL BENEFIT
YOU KNOW, OUR CONCERTS ALSO HAVE A HIDDEN GOAL. WE FEED ON YOUR ENERGY

SHAME ALL SPECTERS AREN'T LIKE THAT
A PROBLEM ISN'T ALWAYS SOLVED WITH AN EASY SOLUTION YOU NEED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT.
IT'S A BAD HABIT TO ONLY UNDERSTAND THINGS VAGUELY
DON'T FOOL YOURSELF, ISKA.
WE COULD COEXIST
THINGS NEED TO CALM DOWN ON THIS ISLAND.
...HOW CAN I FIND THE PATH THAT LEADS TO AN EASY LIFE? AFTER ALL, THAT'S WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT, RIGHT? BEING ABLE TO LIVE WITHOUT HAVING MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT...
BUT...
THAT'S TRUE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, LORD TENMA?

LORD TENMA
YOU'RE FINALLY BACK.
SORRY TO INTERRUPT BUT I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU
THERE IS A MESSAGE FROM SHITEN SEIRYUU-SAMA.
ISKA I'LL MEET YOU AFTER HAVING SEEN ZAZAR!
DON'T WAIT FOR ME
I DON'T SENSE ANY KASHA
THERE SHOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE IF YOU GO BACK THROUGH THE MAIN ROADS.
YES
I'LL BE CAREFUL.



THAT REMINDS ME... WE MUST BE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MATSURI SUMMER FESTIVAL.
THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH IT'S LATE.



UNLIKE THE CAPITAL, WE CAN RARELY SEE SPECTERS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY AROUND HERE
MY TUTOR TOLD ME THAT IN THE COUNTRY, MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, THE SEPARATION IS STRICTER

HEY YOU, OVER THERE, WITH THE OLD-FASHIONED HAIRCUT!

DON'T PRETEND NOT TO HEAR ME ANSWER ME WHEN I TALK.

HEY, YOU!
HEY DICK-HEAD!

Yep, he's really a dickhead
KANAE? WHAT'S GOING ON?

SO, DID YOU LIKE IT?

YEAH...
YOU HAD CLASS ALL FIVE OF YOU
YOU AL-READY PACKED UP? YOU'RE READY TO LEAVE?
YOU HELPED ME A LOT, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU FOUND SACRED WOOD FOR ME
IT'S A BIT LATE BUT ANYWAY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH
YES, BUT I WENT WITH MANASHI
STEEL IS HEAVIER THAN WOOD.
YOU STRUGGLED MORE THAN WE DID.
NAH, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
YES..

THANK YOU
I'M ACTUALLY THE ONE...
...IT HELPED THE MOST
HERE, TAKE THIS!
I'M GIVING YOU WHAT I TOOK
THAT'S ALL I HAVE. SO ENJOY!
OKAY, BYE. I HAVE TO GO!

W...
WAI...
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM?
COOL, CANDIES!
I WONDER HOW MR MINAMOTO WILL REPAIR THE YUKI-HIRA...
SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHAT KIND OF SWORD IS IT?
AFTER ALL, NO OTHER SWORD HAS EVER HURT NUE.

THE BLADE THAT STOLE HIS FREEDOM FOR 400 YEARS MUST HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL TO BE ABLE TO WOUND SUCH A FORMIDABLE DEMON AND KEEP IT PRISONER FOR SO LONG!

DO NOT TURN AROUND!
WHAT IS THIS FEELING?
HUH?
DOM!! DOM!!
SO, YOUNG MAN...
OH MY GOD, I RECOGNIZE IT!
...YOU'RE HUNTING ME DOWN? ACCORDING TO WHAT I'VE HEARD, YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH A LOT OF TROUBLE TO FIND A WAY TO STOP ME.

DO YOU REALLY WISH TO FACE ME?
AREN'T YOU AFRAID TO ATTACK SOMEONE STRONGER THAN YOU ARE? THAT MEANS DEATH DOES NOT SCARE YOU. THAT'S GOOD.
EVEN IF YOU ARE THE ONE WHO FREED ME, DON'T THINK I'LL LET MYSELF BE CAPTURED THAT EASILY AFTER ALL, I DO LIKE MY FREEDOM

BUT IF YOU DO CHASE ME...
YOU WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL AND PERSISTENT
IF YOU GET IN MY WAY, I WON'T BE THE ONE WHO WILL ANNIHILATE YOU.
BECAUSE, YOU SEE, DESTROYING YOU IS OF NO INTEREST TO ME.
IT WOULD KILL YOUR 2ND PERSONALITY... AND I REALLY DON'T WANT THIS TO HAPPEN.

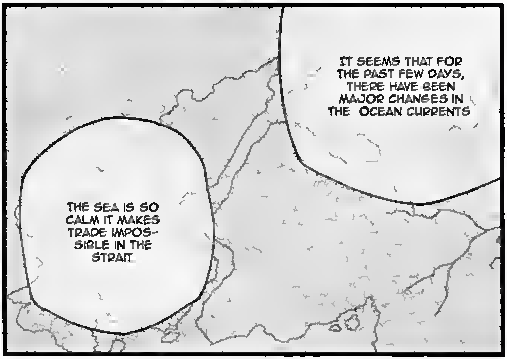
NUE!

Shuri castle, Imperial residence.
SUZAKU!
YOU'RE VERY LATE!
GOOD LORD, YOU KNOW WE HAVE TO WAIT FOR YOU, RIGHT?!
SORRY, I GOT LOST ON MY WAY BACK.
STOP TAKING ME FOR AN IDIOT!
BEING LATE TO A FUNERAL WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE LEADING THE FUNERAL PROCESSION IS UNHEARD OF!

KIKYO.
LISTEN TO ME SERIOUSLY SUZAKU AS THE PERSON INHERITING THE NAME OF YOUR ANCESTORS...
MY MEMORY ISN'T AS GOOD AS YOURS YOU JUST HAVE TO SUM UP YOUR LECTURE ON PAPER.
YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES NOW
YOU NEED TO REALIZE YOU HAVE TO ACT LIKE A LEADER!
I THINK THAT MINDSET IS ARCHAIC AND DOESN'T APPLY TO MEN LIKE ME
YOU MUST HONOUR YOUR FATHER'S NAME. NOT USE IT ABUSIVELY
BESIDES, I DON'T WANT TO LISTEN TO POINTLESS STORIES

I HAVE TWO OR THREE THINGS TO TELL YOU.
THEY ARE ALL EQUALLY IMPORTANT SO I WILL GO IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

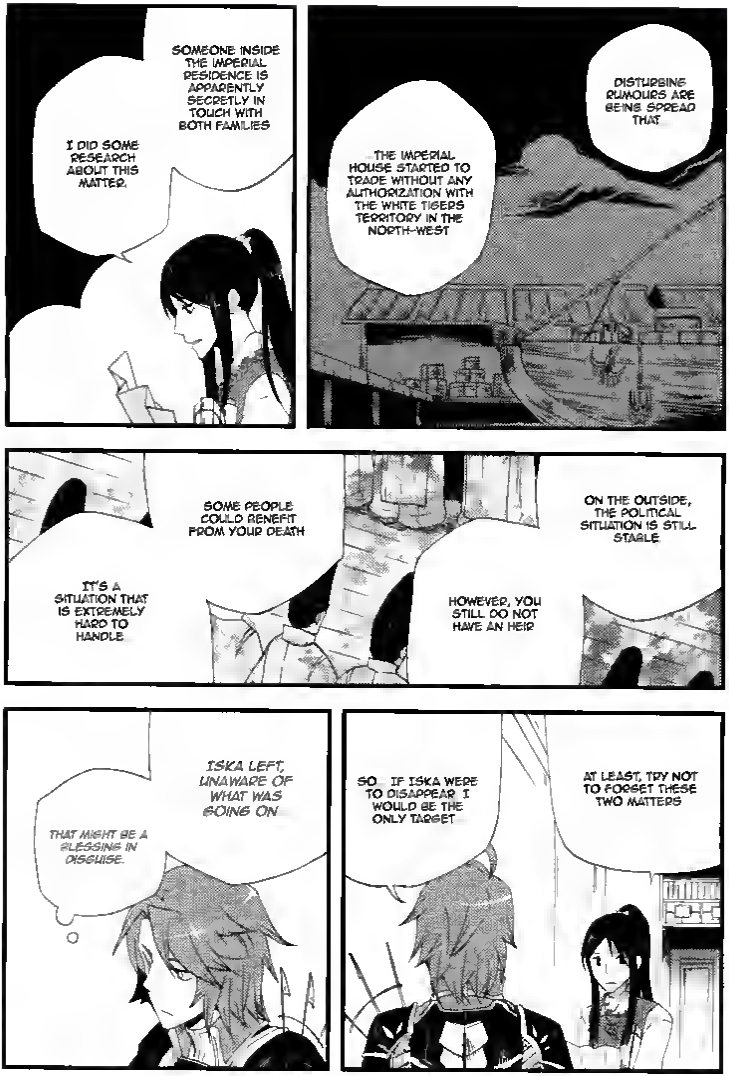
CURRENTLY, THIS DOESN'T CAUSE A LOT OF CHANGE TO THE FISHING ACTIVITY
HOWEVER WE SHOULD INTRODUCE MEASURES TO ANTICIPATE EVENTUAL PROBLEMS


IT SEEMS THAT FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS, THERE HAVE BEEN MAJOR CHANGES IN THE OCEAN CURRENTS
THE SEA IS SO CALM IT MAKES TRADE IMPOSSIBLE IN THE STRAIT

IT CONCERNS A REGION AT THE FAR WEST IT ISN'T GOVERNED BY THE GIOH
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE OHOTSU AND SHIROGANE FAMILIES WHO ARE IN CHARGE OF DECENTRALIZING THE AUTHORITY?

COME ON, CONTINUE!
EXPLAIN IT TO ME

THE SECOND...

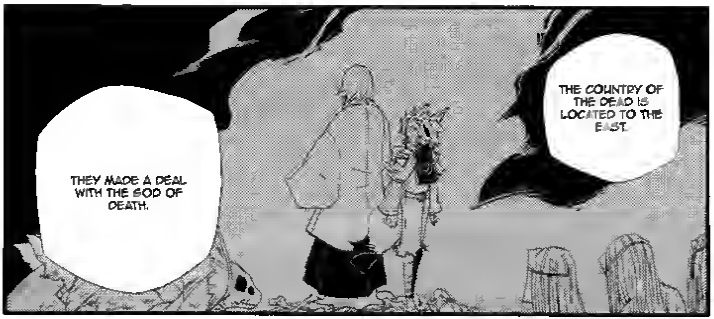

I DID SOME RESEARCH ABOUT THIS MATTER.
SOMEONE INSIDE THE IMPERIAL RESIDENCE IS APPARENTLY SECRETLY IN TOUCH WITH BOTH FAMILIES
THE IMPERIAL HOUSE STARTED TO TRADE WITHOUT ANY AUTHORIZATION WITH THE WHITE TIGERS TERRITORY IN THE NORTH-WEST
DISTURBING RUMOURS ARE BEING SPREAD THAT
IT'S A SITUATION THAT IS EXTREMELY HARD TO HANDLE
SOME PEOPLE COULD BENEFIT FROM YOUR DEATH
HOWEVER, YOU STILL DO NOT HAVE AN HEIR
ON THE OUTSIDE, THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS STILL STABLE
THAT MIGHT BE A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.
ISKA LEFT, UNAWARE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON
SO... IF ISKA WERE TO DISAPPEAR I WOULD BE THE ONLY TARGET
AT LEAST, TRY NOT TO FORGET THESE TWO MATTERS

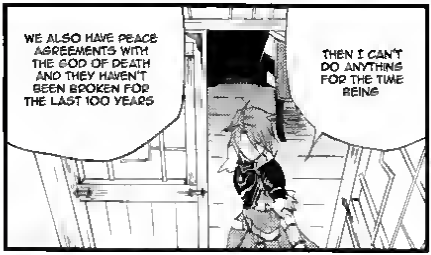
...THE NINJAS THAT FLED TO THE EAST CAME BACK
TO CONCLUDE...

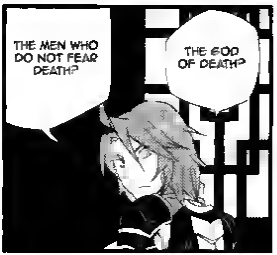
MIGHT?
HAHA-HAHA!
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO?

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST...
IT IS NOT MY PLACE TO ADVISE YOU
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE SITUATION?
...BUT I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR OPINION

YOUR INTUITION MIGHT HAVE BEEN RIGHT
WE INVESTIGATED THE MOVEMENTS OF THE KASHI AFTER THEIR RETREAT. IT SEEMS THEIR OBJECTIVE MIGHT HAVE CHANGED.

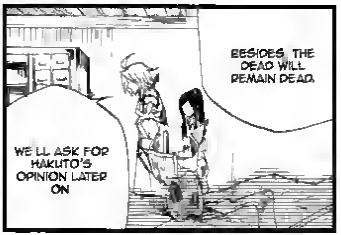

THE COUNTRY OF THE DEAD IS LOCATED TO THE EAST.
THEY MADE A DEAL WITH THE GOD OF DEATH.


WE ALSO HAVE PEACE AGREEMENTS WITH THE GOD OF DEATH AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN BROKEN FOR THE LAST 100 YEARS
THEN I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR THE TIME BEING


THE MEN WHO DO NOT FEAR DEATH?
THE GOD OF DEATH?

YES
IS THAT IT?
...FOR NOW

AND WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WANTS
I WON'T TAKE THE RISK TO BREAK THEM
HIS SON RYŪTSUKO, WAS JUST SPOTTED INSIDE OUR LANDS


BESIDES, THE DEAD WILL REMAIN DEAD.
WE'LL ASK FOR HAKUTO'S OPINION LATER ON

I DON'T KNOW FOR HOW LONG THE IMPERIAL DYNASTY WILL SURVIVE. THAT'S WHAT WORRIES ME.
SUZAKU
DON'T FORGET YOU'RE ON THE FRONT LINE
I KNOW
BY ONLY FIGHTING FAR-AWAY ENEMIES WE ARE FORGETTING OUR CLOSE ONES
MY ANCESTORS' DYNASTY IS TOUGHER THAN YOU THINK.
FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE, NUE IS A 1000 YEARS OLD LEGEND. HOWEVER, WE STILL FEEL HIS INFLUENCE PRETTY MUCH EVERYWHERE.
IF HE PROVOKES A GREAT REBELLION, THE GIOH FAMILY WILL BE BLAMED FOR ITS LACK OF VIGILANCE
MOREOVER, NUE IS BACK
RIGHT NOW, WE CAN SEARCH FOR INFORMATION TO DESTROY THE KASHA.

I UNDERSTAND. I'LL CUT OUT THE UNTIMELY WARNINGS.
HOWEVER, THERE ARE STILL SHADOW ZONES, WHICH IS PRETTY ALARMING.

HAHAHA! SEEMS LIKE YOU THINK WE'LL HAVE A LOT OF TROUBLE TO PULL THROUGH!
STOP WORRYING, KIKYO OR YOU'LL AGE VERY QUICKLY.

SHADOW ZONES?
I'M THE ONE WHO CREATED THEM!
DO NOT WORRY. I WILL MEASURE UP TO THE REPUTATION OF MY ANCESTORS. I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN

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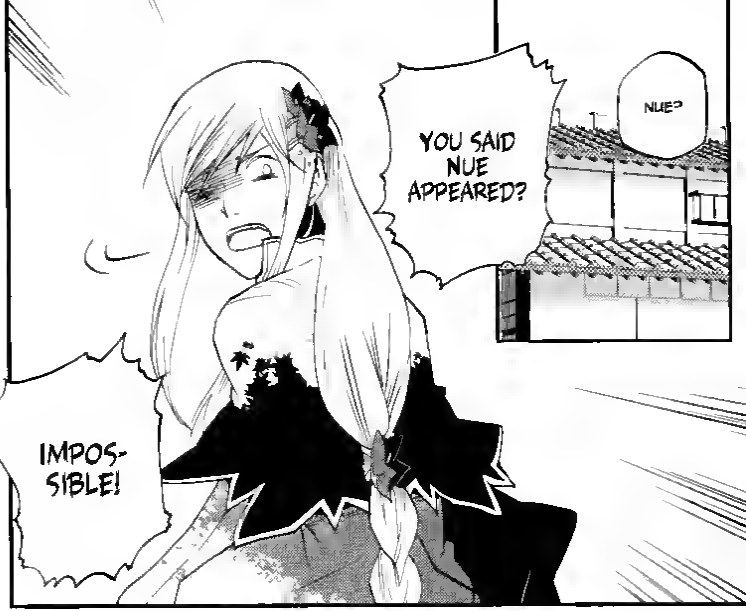
I often have the same kind of dream...

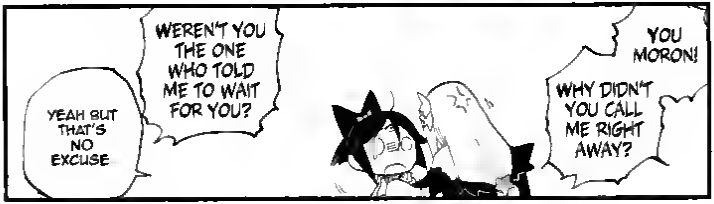
YAAAAAAAAAA WWWWNNNN DAMN, I SLEPT PRETTY WELL, BELIEVE ME
AND...
THE GUY YOU MET...
IT WAS... IT WAS...
NUE...
YEAH, YOU SEE...
BASICALLY TO COMPLETE YOUR OBJECTIVE, YOU'LL HAVE TO DEFEAT HIM IN ONE SHOT
SO IT'LL BE SIMPLER IF I TAKE OVER YOUR BODY.

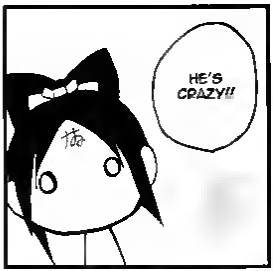
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAKE ME UP?
TO THINK NUE TRAVELLED FROM THE OTHER WORLD JUST TO MEET YOU...
AH...
PFFFFT, WHAT A SHAME! WE WOULD HAVE HAD SOME FUN.
IT WASN'T THE RIGHT TIME.
LET'S JUST SAY I WAS SURPRISED AND SCARED
IT WOULD KILL YOUR SECOND PERSONALITY... AND I REALLY DON'T WANT THIS TO HAPPEN.

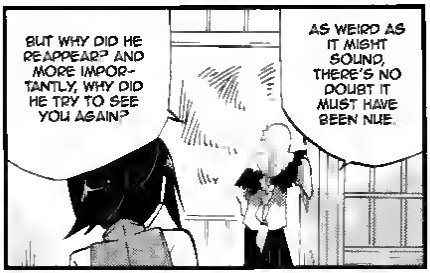
YEAH, NOT SUCH A COMFORTING ATMOSPHERE, HUH?
GRR
Nue is so confident when he speaks. It's intimidating.
I absolutely can't afford to underestimate him.
BY THE WAY, WHAT IS THAT THING?
A FRIEND?
YOU'D BETTER OPEN YOUR EYES.
IT'S MY SERVANT.
But I must still continue to pursue him. I cannot give up.
THE LINE BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY IS SO THIN.
IT'S ANNOYING NOT TO KNOW WHERE IT IS. BESIDES, THERE ARE TOO MANY THINGS I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

Chapter 14:
Winter Road!


NUE?
YOU SAID NUE APPEARED?
IMPOS-SIBLE!


YOU MORON!
WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME RIGHT AWAY?
WEREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO WAIT FOR YOU?
YEAH BUT THAT'S NO EXCUSE


HE'S CRAZY!!


AS WEIRD AS IT MIGHT SOUND, THERE'S NO DOUBT IT MUST HAVE BEEN NUE.
BUT WHY DID HE REAPPEAR? AND MORE IMPOR-TANTLY, WHY DID HE TRY TO SEE YOU AGAIN?

HE TOLD ME HE HAD NO INTENTION TO KILL ME
YES
YOU'RE SAFE AND SOUND, SO THAT MEANS
I DON'T RE-MEMBER THE DETAILS
I WAS IN SHOCK AND OVERWHELMED WITH FEAR
OH, REALLY?
WHAT DID HE SAY EXACTLY?

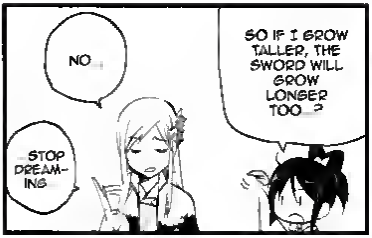
YOU'RE REALLY JUST A FREAKING IDIOT!!!!!!!
LORD TENMA, YOUR GREAT AGE NO LONGER ALLOWS YOU TO HAVE SUCH OUTBURSTS... YOU SHOULD CALM DOWN.
SNIFF... YES, BUT...
HMDOO...
HE INSULTED YOU AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN REACT!
DAMMIT! YOU'RE JUST A COWARD!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DESTROY HIM, SO REACT A BIT, WILL YOU!
FOR AN IMMORTAL LIKE NUE, YOU ARE A SERIOUS THREAT!
YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO BE AFRAID AND BACK DOWN!

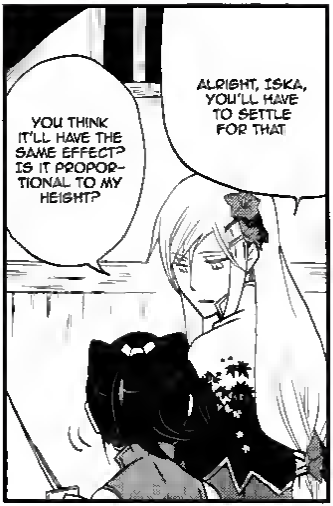
NUE SPARED ME...
YES, SO HE MUST HAVE HAD A GOOD REASON
LET'S SEE...
IS IT BEST TO WAIT UNTIL HE MAKES HIS MOVE OR SHOULD WE TAKE THE INITIATIVE?
YOU THINK HE SEES ME AS USELESS?
EXACTLY.

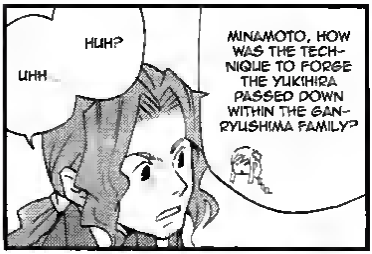
YEP.
HE DOESN'T EVEN CONSIDER ME AN ENEMY?
YES, PRECISELY.
HE'S LOOKING DOWN ON ME?
VERY WELL THEN! LET'S PROVE TO HIM I'M AN ENEMY WORTHY OF THE NAME.
NOW THAT THE YUKIHIRA IS REPAIRED, I CAN START GOING AFTER HIM
HURRY UP, WE'RE GOING TO MINAMOTO'S PLACE!

OH!
YOU'RE HERE ALREADY
WELL, IT GAVE ME A LOT OF TROUBLE BUT THE EXPERT AND MAGICAL HANDS OF THE WONDERFUL MINAMOTO PULLED THROUGH!
HAHAHA, YOU'LL SEE, YOUNG MAN! YOU WILL HAVE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL KATANA IN EXISTENCE! I SAY IT'S A TRUE GEM, U-N-I-Q-U-E ANYWAY, IT'S THE WORK OF A LIFETIME
THE GANRYUSHIMA MASTER PREPARED THE ACE UP YOUR SLEEVES!
WATCH OUT FOR YOUR EYES, IT IS SO PRETTY IT COULD DAZZLE YOU!
I UNDERSTAND! NO NEED TO HURRY I'M THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE, AFTER ALL.
IT'S NICE OF YOU TO PUBLICIZE YOUR TALENT BUT WE JUST WANT TO SEE THE PRODUCT

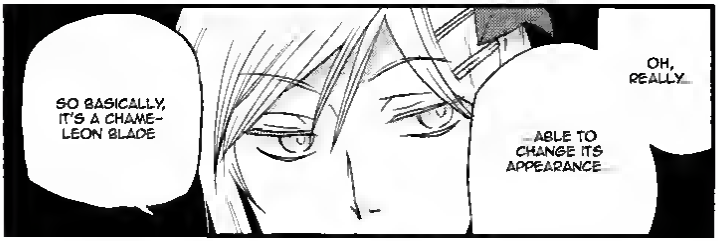
AT FIRST, THAT'S WHAT I ALSO THOUGHT BUT... UHH...
WELL...
LET'S SEE...
ALRIGHT, ENOUGH. STOP MESSING AROUND. WE HAVE TO TRUST THE CREATOR.
HUH?
DOESN'T IT SEEM TO BE A BIT SMALL? IT LOOKS LIKE IT SHRANK
I FOLLOWED MY NOTES TO THE LETTER, SO THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEM
I ASSURE YOU, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE DIFFERENCE RELAX A BIT
THE TECHNIQUE TO FORGE THIS SWORD IS PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION
NO... THAT'S NOT IT... BUT WELL, HAVING A SWORD AS LONG AS A TOOTHPICK LOOKS A LITTLE BIT LESS HEROIC... EITHER WAY, IT'S TOO LATE
AND THEN, I THOUGHT IT WAS ADAPTED FOR A 10 YEARS OLD KID MY GOD, WILL MY PROFESSIONALISM WITHSTAND SUCH A TRAGEDY?
DOM DOM
...AND THEN IT SHRANK ON ITS OWN. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON AT ALL
HEE!?
I HAD BARELY FINISHED A TRULY PROFESSIONAL WORK. I WAS INCREDIBLY PROUD.
WHOOA!


NO...
STOP DREAMING...
SO IF I GROW TALLER, THE SWORD WILL GROW LONGER TOO...?


ALRIGHT, ISKA, YOU'LL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR THAT
YOU THINK IT'LL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT? IS IT PROPORTIONAL TO MY HEIGHT?


HUH?
UHH...
MINAMOTO, HOW WAS THE TECHNIQUE TO FORGE THE YUKIHIRA PASSED DOWN WITHIN THE GANRYUSHIMA FAMILY?

IT HAS A BLADE ABLE TO CHANGE ITS APPEARANCE AND IT CAN RESIST RUST AND CADAVERS' FLESH...
IT'S A SWORD THAT DOESN'T CUT HUMANS. IT ONLY CUTS SPECTERS...
ABOUT THE YUKIHIRA, WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT...


SO BASICALLY, IT'S A CHAMELEON BLADE
OH, REALLY...
...ABLE TO CHANGE ITS APPEARANCE

BASI-
CALLY...
IT ALSO MEANS THAT IF ITS OWNER IS WEAK, THE YUKIHIRA WILL BE COM-
PLETELY HARMLESS
ACCORDING TO THE LEGEND, IT MUST SLASH THE MOST EVIL SPECTER OF ALL.
IT'S THE TRUMP CARD THAT HUMANS AND SPECTERS CREATED
IT CONTAINS A TREMENDOUS POWER THAT IS ONLY DANGER-
OUS FOR NUE
THUS, NO MEMBER OF THE GIOH FAMILY HAS BEEN ABLE TO USE IT FOR THE PAST 400 YEARS BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO WEAK
400 YEARS AGO, THE FOUR SHITEN SPECTERS WHO CAME DOWN FROM THE NORTHERN SKIES TO KILL NUE
EACH CAST A SPELL ON THE YUKIHIRA SO IT COULD NOT BE USED TOWARDS EVIL ENDS

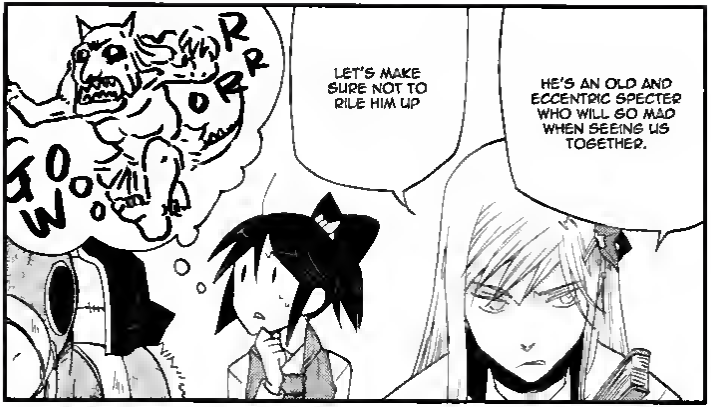
THE VERY FACT THAT I CAN USE THE YUKIHIRA IS PROOF ENOUGH
SO
THAT MEANS I'M NOT WEAK!
OH?
IF WE ARE TO BELIEVE THE LEGEND,
THE YUKIHIRA WILL SHOW ITS TRUE FORM THE MOMENT IT PIERCES NUE.

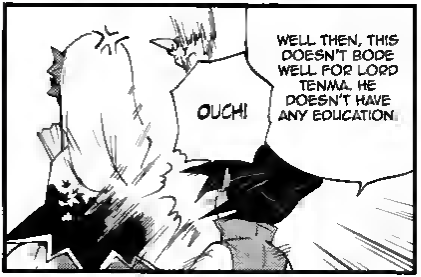
...BUT I THINK NOW WOULD BE THE BEST TIME TO MEET THEM.
I WANTED YOU TO SEE THEM LATER ON...
IN THAT CASE..
LET'S GO SEE THE SHITEN
YOU WILL HAVE TO BE BRAVE BUT I'M SURE YOU WILL SHOW US THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MY YUKIHIRA.
I'M SURE YOU CAN DO IT. MAKE US PROUD
YOUR MISSION WON'T BE EASY. THERE WILL BE MORE AND MORE OBSTACLES ON YOUR WAY
LITTLE GENIUS.
MINAMOTO, THE YUKIHIRA'S BLACKSMITH IS WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH YOU.

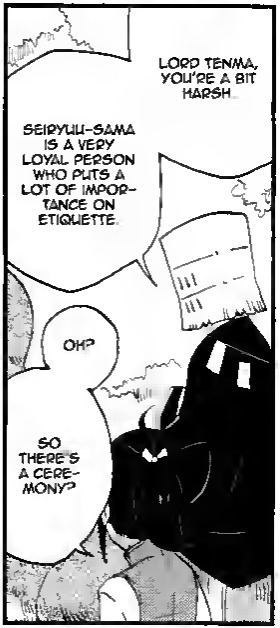
THE SHITEN THAT GOVERNS WINTER.
HIS NAME IS TOUSENTEN SEIRYUU.

WINTER
OK, SO WHICH ONE ARE WE GOING TO SEE FIRST?
YES, THAT'S RIGHT
THERE ARE FOUR SHITEN?
WINTER ?

WE WILL FIND HIM AT KURANAYAMA. YOU SEE MIZUDORI, THE WATER'S GATE? WELL, IT'S FURTHER SOUTH.
AT THE PEAK WHERE THE TOUKYUU, THE WINTER PALACE, WAS BUILT, HE IS AWAITING US


GROOOWL
LET'S MAKE SURE NOT TO RILE HIM UP
HE'S AN OLD AND ECCENTRIC SPECTER WHO WILL GO MAD WHEN SEEING US TOGETHER.


OUCH!
WELL THEN, THIS DOESN'T BODE WELL FOR LORD TENMA. HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY EDUCATION.

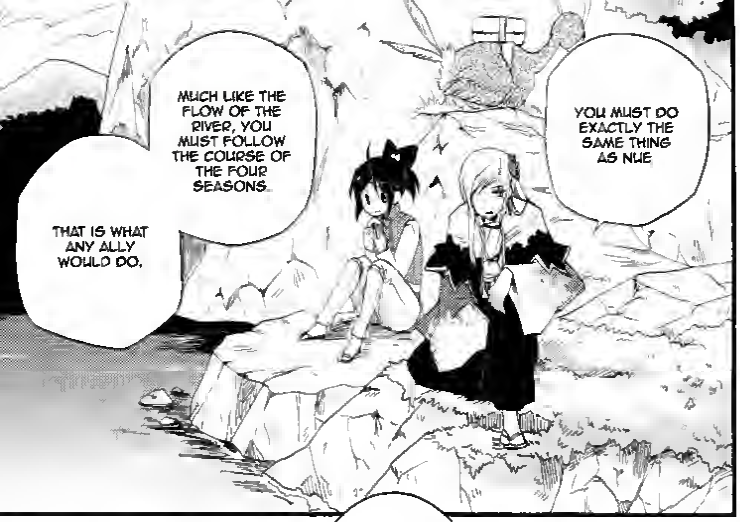

LORD TENMA, YOU'RE A BIT HARSH.
SEIRYUU-SAMA IS A VERY LOYAL PERSON WHO PUTS A LOT OF IMPORTANCE ON ETIQUETTE.
OH?
SO THERE'S A CEREMONY?

YOU WOULDN'T BE SO CLEVER IF YOU ACTUALLY KNEW WHO YOU WERE GOING TO MEET.
THAT OLD MAN IS STRICT AND MOST DEFINITELY NOT INCLINED TO LAUGH

I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU NIGHT AND DAY AND LOOK AFTER YOU UNTIL YOU ELIMINATE NUE!
NOW, THAT IS EMBARRASSING ME!
IF HE DOESN'T LOSE HIS TEMPER, HE'LL ACCEPT US
A MONTH AND A HALF? IT'S THAT FAR?
IT'S GOING TO TAKE US A MONTH AND A HALF
I HOPE YOU HAVE GOOD SHOES
AT ANY RATE, WE NOW NEED TO HEAD SOUTH.
OUR ROAD WILL BE LONG AND DANGEROUS
IF IT TAKES A YEAR, NUE WON'T BE ABLE TO REGAIN HIS INITIAL STRENGTH
ONE YEAR? NUE WILL WAIT ONE YEAR FOR ME?
AND HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE TO MEET ALL FOUR?
I FEAR IT WILL TAKE US AT LEAST ONE YEAR
...

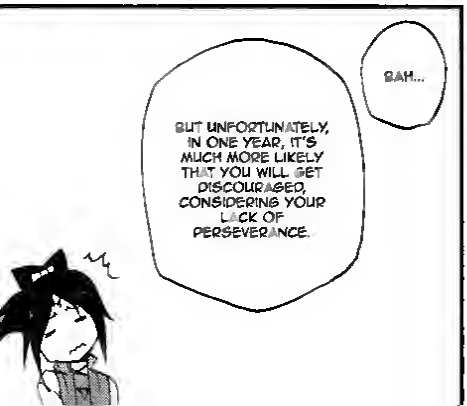
YESTERDAY, I DIDN'T WATCH OUT FOR NUE EVEN THOUGH HE WAS CLOSE.
HUH?
WHAT'S WITH THOSE INQUIRING EYES?
IT'S HARD TO MAKE A HUMAN UNDERSTAND THIS CONCEPT SO LISTEN CAREFULLY
BASICALLY, NUE AND THE HIGH SPECTERS DRAW THEIR POWERS FROM THE FLOW OF TIME.
...OR IF YOU PREFER ANOTHER TERM...
...FROM THE FOUR SEASONS.

NUE WANTED TO GO TOO QUICKLY THE FIRST TIME AROUND, EVEN IF IT SOUNDS A BIT PARADOXICAL.
WHEN YOU FREED NUE, HE DIDN'T HAVE HIS FULL STRENGTH. IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS WEAK.
TO RECOVER HIS FULL POWER, HE HAS TO GO THROUGH ALL FOUR SEASONS OR IN OTHER WORDS, WAIT ONE YEAR.
THAT IS WHY HE HAS BEEN KEEPING A LOW PROFILE OTHERWISE, HUMANS OR SPECTERS WOULD GO AFTER HIM
HE'S MUCH MORE CLEVER THAN IN THE PAST ?
SO I THINK HE WILL LAY LOW FOR A YEAR TO AVOID REPEATING THE SAME MISTAKE HE DID 400 YEARS AGO
SO THAT MEANS THAT WE NEED TO SEE THE FOUR SHIKEN BEFORE A YEAR PASSES...
AND THAT EACH OF THEM REPRESENT A SEASON, CORRECT?
YES
THEY RESPECTIVELY GOVERN SPRING, SUMMER, FALL, AND WINTER.


MUCH LIKE THE FLOW OF THE RIVER, YOU MUST FOLLOW THE COURSE OF THE FOUR SEASONS.
THAT IS WHAT ANY ALLY WOULD DO.
YOU MUST DO EXACTLY THE SAME THING AS NUE

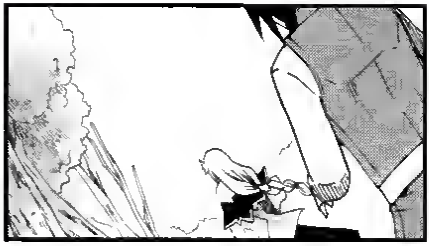
NO NEED TO OVER THINK
IF YOU ARE APPROVED BY ALL FOUR SHITEN...
YOUR CONFI-DENCE WILL GROW MUCH STRONGER

IN ONE YEAR...
IF WE HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO SEE THEM ALL, I WILL BECOME THE ONE WHO WILL SLAY NUE


BAH...
BUT UNFORTUNATELY, IN ONE YEAR, IT'S MUCH MORE LIKELY THAT YOU WILL GET DISCOURAGED, CONSIDERING YOUR LACK OF PERSEVERANCE.

THE WAR AGAINST NUE WAS VERY BLOODY
THE SEVENTH SUZAKU GIOH DISPLAYED FORMIDABLE CONTROL
TENMA?
WHY DO YOU KNOW MY ANCESTORS SO WELL?
WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU REALLY?
COME ON, TELL ME!
AN-OTHER TIME
THEN, AT LEAST TELL ME
..WHAT KIND OF RELATION-SHIP DID YOU HAVE WITH MY FAMILY?
WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS ANOTHER TIME IF I EVER FEEL LIKE IT

I HAD A TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FAMILY.
...AN...
TRI...
ISKA...
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
WAIT, TENMA!
WAIT!



IT'S THE WINTER WIND

FALL IS COMING TO A CLOSE WE MUST REACH KURANAYAMA QUICKLY

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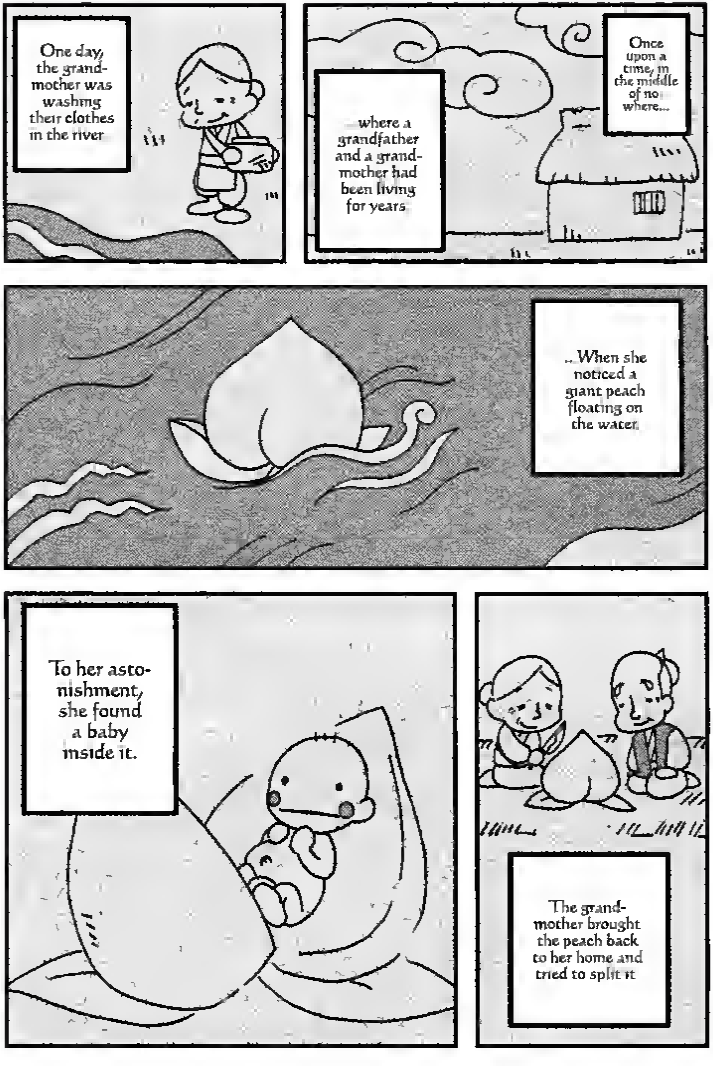
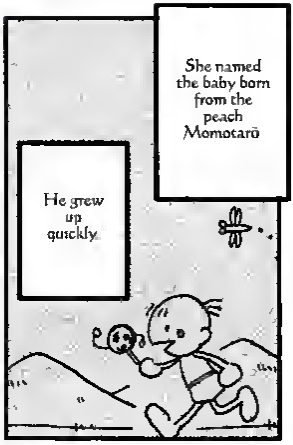
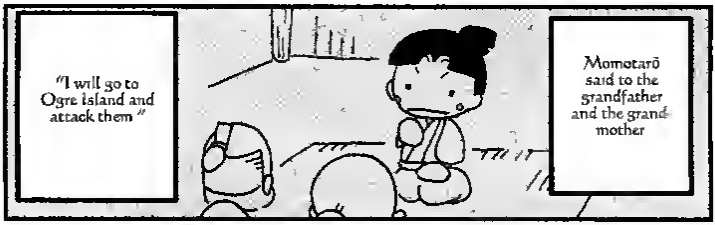

Once upon a time, in the middle of no where...
where a grandfather and a grandmother had been living for years
One day, the grandmother was washing their clothes in the river
.. When she noticed a giant peach floating on the water
To her astonishment, she found a baby inside it.
The grandmother brought the peach back to her home and tried to split it

At the same time when Momotarō was becoming big and remarkable, there was a big problem in the village.
Ogres came to the village and were breaking everything in their path



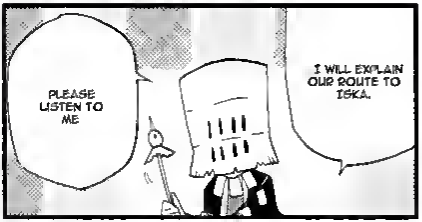


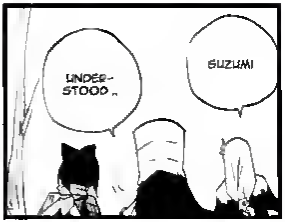
*TL/NOTE: JAPANESE DUMPLING

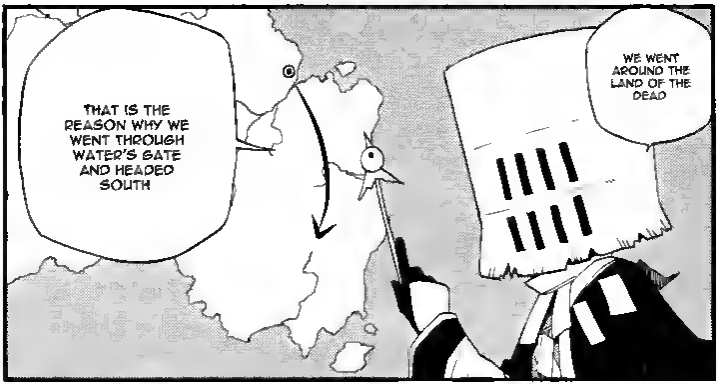
Finally, Momotarō landed on the island
Where many evil ogres lived...
KUHYA, HYA, HYA!
YEAH, KILLING OGRES IS FUN!!
I WILL CUT OFF THEIR ARMS AND THEIR LEGS BEFORE TORTURING THEM! HAHAHAHA!
I WILL SLAUGHTER THEM TO THE VERY LAST, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, EVEN IF IT WILL TAKE ME YEARS TO ACCOMPLISH!
Momotarō outstandingly annihilated the ogres.
He returned with Ogre Island's treasure and lived happily ever after
He celebrated for 10 days and 10 nights

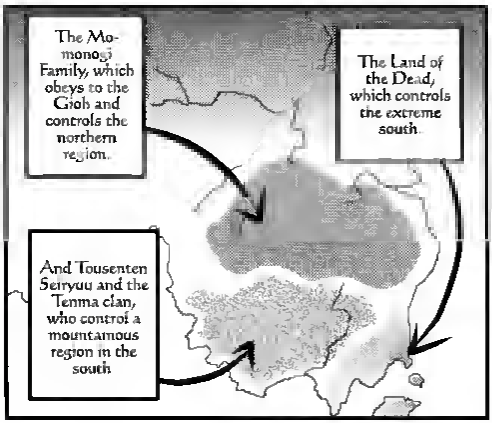
Chapter 15:
Peach Boy, Momotarō-san!

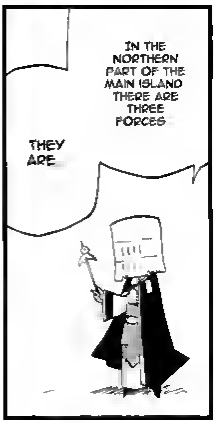
YEAR 2240 OF THE SIOH CALENDAR, AT THE BORDER BETWEEN AUTUMN AND WINTER
IT'S GETTING COLDER AND COLDER. BRRR!
THE SOUTH-EAST SIDE OF THE ISLAND IS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE WINTER SHIREN
WINTER THERE IS LONGER AND HARSHER THAN ANY OTHER PLACE ON THE PLANET
YEAH, WELL.
DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE GOD OF DEATH
DECEASED SOULS BRING DOWN THE TEMPERATURE.
THE GOD OF DEATH?


PLEASE LISTEN TO ME
I WILL EXPLAIN OUR ROUTE TO ISKA.


UNDER-STOOD..
SUZUMI


THAT IS THE REASON WHY WE WENT THROUGH WATER'S GATE AND HEADED SOUTH
WE WENT AROUND THE LAND OF THE DEAD

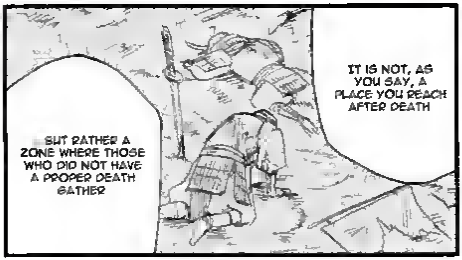

The Momonogi Family, which obeys to the Gioh and controls the northern region.
The Land of the Dead, which controls the extreme south.
And Tousenten Seiryuu and the Tenma clan, who control a mountainous region in the south


IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE MAIN ISLAND THERE ARE THREE FORCES
THEY ARE

OKAY
SO IN THIS WEATHER, THEY ARE HARMLESS
THE KASHA ARE GENERALLY WEAK AGAINST COLD BECAUSE THEY ARE AQUATIC CREATURES
HOWEVER, THEY HAVE NO SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
WE CAN ALSO FIND KASHA IN THE SOUTHERN SEAS
HE
LET ME EXPLAIN
WE CAN'T SAY THAT NEWS IS A GOOD OMEN
I GOT WIND THAT THE KASHA AND THE LAND OF THE DEAD CONTACTED EACH OTHER A LITTLE WHILE AGO
I also have to note that for the past 1000 years, the Land of the Dead has stayed neutral and hasn't involved itself in any conflict.
Now, Seiryuu-sama, head of the Tenma clan, protects this region with the help of the dead and humans.
For several years, the Momonogi Family governed part of the region under the name of the Imperial Family.

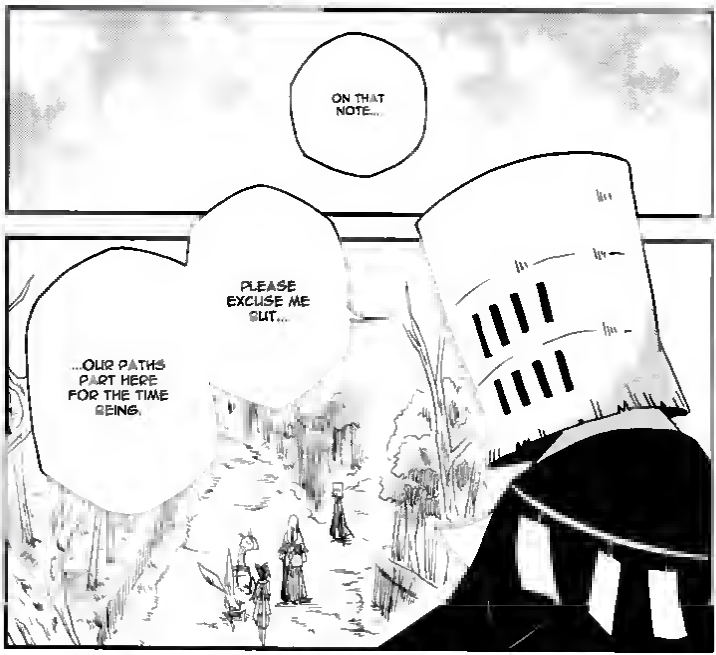
THE LAND OF THE DEAD? WOULDN'T THAT BE THE EQUIVALENT OF HELL? SOME SORT OF PLACE YOU REACH AFTER DEATH?
HUH?

AND THAT'S PRETTY MUCH ALL I HAD TO SAY
DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

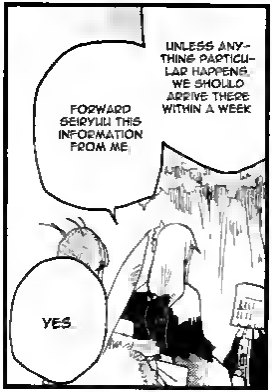

IT IS NOT, AS YOU SAY, A PLACE YOU REACH AFTER DEATH
...BUT RATHER A ZONE WHERE THOSE WHO DID NOT HAVE A PROPER DEATH GATHER

YES, THEY ARE FAIRLY ALIKE...
...BUT IT'S STILL DIFFERENT.

IT ISN'T A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE FOR THE DEAD EITHER
IT'S BEST TO THINK THAT UNLIKE THE TENMA AND KASHA CLANS, IT REGROUPS THOSE WHO WERE LEFT OUT.


ON THAT NOTE...
PLEASE EXCUSE ME BUT...
...OUR PATHS PART HERE FOR THE TIME BEING.

I HOPE YOU WON'T ENCOUNTER ANY PROBLEM ON YOUR WAY.
BE CAREFUL.


UNLESS ANYTHING PARTICULAR HAPPENS, WE SHOULD ARRIVE THERE WITHIN A WEEK.
FORWARD SEIRYUU THIS INFORMATION FROM ME.
YES.

AH, NO, NOT OVER THERE. SO THAT WAY, MANASHI!
HE!

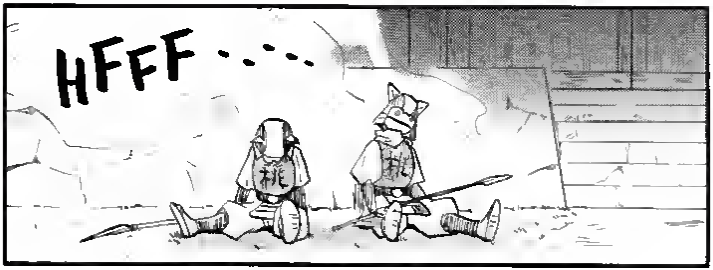
UHH, TENMA, TELL ME
WHAT IS IT?
IF THERE ISN'T ANY PROBLEM IT WILL ONLY TAKE A WEEK, RIGHT?
YES.

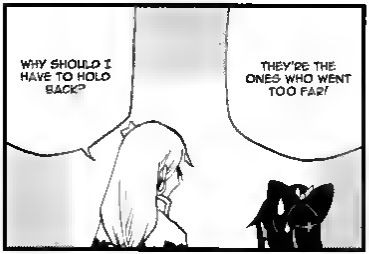
YOU SEE, IT'S JUST AS I SAID! EXACTLY ONE WEEK!
I WONDER WHY THE ROAD HAS BEEN SO SAFE .
SHOW US YOUR PASS-PORTS.
A CHECK-POINT? WHAT IS THAT?
YOU, OVER THERE, WHO ARE YOU?
THIS IS THE MOMONOGI CHECK-POINT HERE!
I DON'T RECALL EVER SEEING A ROADBLOCK HERE
HAS MOMONOGI EXPANDED HIS TERRITORY AGAIN?

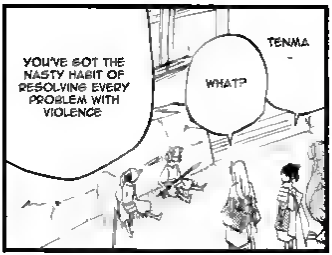
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THERE'S A ROADBLOCK HERE WHEN...
I'M CERTAIN WE ALREADY ENTERED THE TERRITORY OF THE TENMA CLAN
NO, IT'S JUST THAT THIS NEW CHECK-POINT...
IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, TENMA?
OH?
THEN THAT MEANS THIS SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM, HUH?
HEY! YOU LOVEBIRDS OVER THERE!
WE DON'T HAVE ANY PASSPORTS ON HAND
HOW COULD WE CONTINUE OUR WAY IN THAT CASE?
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME WHEN I TALK, YOU SIMPLE-MINDED FOOLS?
I TOLD YOU TO EITHER SHOW US YOUR PASS-PORTS OR TO BUZZ OFF!

WAIT, HOW MUCH DID YOU SAY, SOLDIER?
YOU MUST PAY 9000 SHOUS.. WHICH SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO PASS THROUGH THE CUSTOMS
ACCORDING TO THE LAW ENACTED BY MOMONOSI HIMSELF
ACCORDING TO THE LAW, IT'S ILLEGAL TO TRAVEL WITHOUT A PASSPORT
9000 SHOUS, HOW MUCH IS THAT..?
WHOA!
IT'S REALLY EXPENSIVE!
WE CAN BUY FIVE HORSES AND STILL HAVE SOME CHANGE LEFT WITH THAT
YEAH, IT'S A RIPOFF BUT I LIKE IT THAT WAY
THERE YOU GO
9000 SHOUS
NO WAY, HE'S NOT FOR SALE!!
BUZZ OFF KID, YOU'RE IN THE WAY.
...
THAT'S RIDICULOUS
HUH?
ALTHOUGH THIS KAZERI WOULD DO THE TRICK TOO

SINCE IT'S GOING TO BE THAT WAY, I WILL BE FORCED TO BREAK THE LAW AND FORCE MY WAY IN
KRK

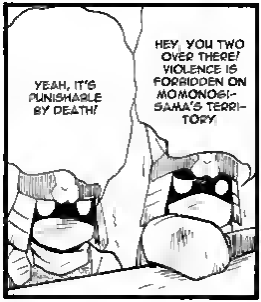

HFFF....


WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO HOLD BACK?
THEY'RE THE ONES WHO WENT TOO FAR!


TENMA
WHAT?
YOU'VE GOT THE NASTY HABIT OF RESOLVING EVERY PROBLEM WITH VIOLENCE

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT
SHUT UP, YOU COWARD, YOU DID JACK SQUAT AGAINST THAT SHEMALE!

UGU.
GUGU-GUGU


HEY, YOU TWO OVER THERE! VIOLENCE IS FORBIDDEN ON MOMONOSI-SAMA'S TERRITORY!
YEAH, IT'S PUNISHABLE BY DEATH!

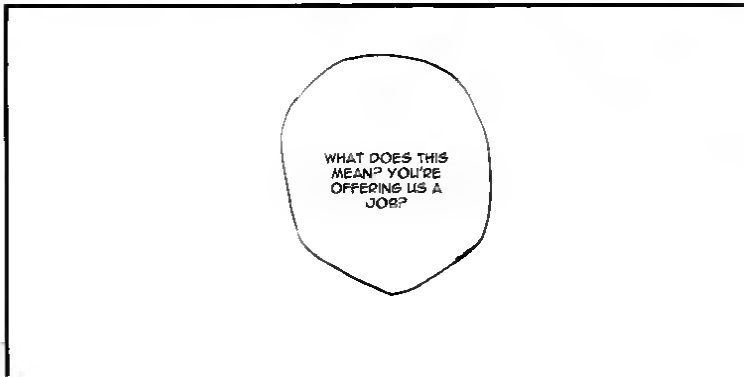
WE DON'T HAVE ANY TIME TO WASTE SO LET'S QUICKLY GO TO THE NEXT CHECKPOINT
OKAY

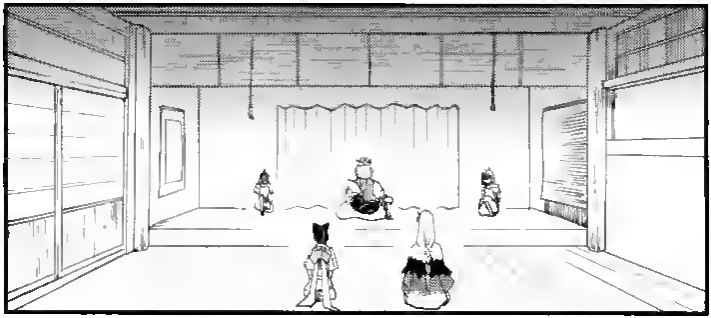
MOMONOGI-SAMA!
TRAVELLERS...
WAIT.
THEY MUST BE EXECUTED!
YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME, MASTER.
MOMONO-GI-SAMA!
THEY ATTACKED US FOR NO REASON AND THEY'RE VERY STRONG WITH-OUT ANY WEAPONS!
THOSE GUYS ARE DESPI-CABLE! THEY DIDN'T PAY THE TOLL!
HE'S THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE MO-MONOSI FAMILY. HE ARRIVED AT A BAD TIME
UHH
WHO IS HE?

YOU CERTAINLY ATTRACTED MY ATTENTION, TRAVELLERS
IT SEEMS YOU ARE TALENTED
HOHO
OU HAVE GUTS TO TRY TO FORCE YOUR WAY THROUGH THE ROADBLOCK I HAD INSTALLED
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH IT THAT EASILY?
AFTER HUMILIATING MY SOLDIERS LIKE THAT?
THAT'S TROUBLESOME... CONSIDER OUR ENEMIES' ATTITUDE, WE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT BY RUNNING AWAY. WE'LL HAVE TO BE CRAFTY.
THAT'S PUNISH-ABLE BY DEATH OVER HERE.

OR MAYBE YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK FOR ME?

THERE HAS TO BE A CARROT ON A STICK FOR THE DONKEYS HOHOHO
NATURALLY, YOU WOULD BE WELL PAID


WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? YOU'RE OFFERING US A JOB?



YOU TRAVEL TOGETHER AND YET NOBODY KNOWS WHY THAT IS AND YOU ARE TOUGH ONES

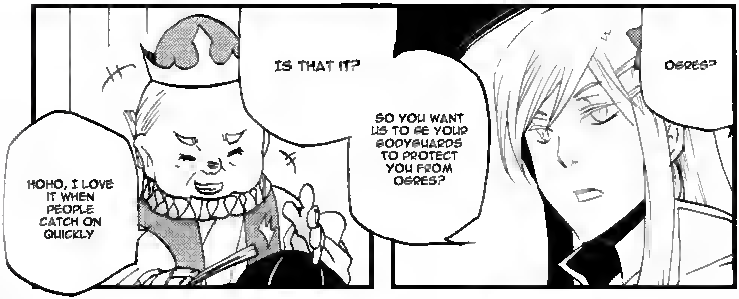
LET'S AT LEAST LISTEN TO WHAT HE HAS TO SAY
TENMA. I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION VERY WELL... WHAT IS GOING ON?
WE'LL HAVE LESS TROUBLE IF WE CAN PASS LEGALLY.

WE ARE HALFWAY THROUGH ON OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS OUR TEACHING PLACE IN KURANAYAMA
INDEED.
WHO'S THAT CLOWN?
OF COURSE WE DON'T, WE'RE NOT BROTHERS
THAT'S ODD BECAUSE YOU DON'T LOOK ALIKE AT ALL.
YOUNG MAN, YOU HAVE A WEIRD NAME.
ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW YOUR OWN NAME?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "LET'S SAY"?
BAH. WHATEVER YOU LIKE. LET'S SAY NANTOKA
MY NAME IS KATSURABI.
AND THAT IS MY LITTLE BROTHER. HIS NAME IS
I WILL PUNISH YOU, YOU IMPUDENT FOOL.
OH
THAT IS .
COULD WE INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE KEEP THIS CONVERSATION SHORT?
ANYWAY, WE HAVE TO GO SOUTH.

MOMOTARO?
YOU KNOW THE GLORIOUS TALE OF THE MOMONOSI, THE DESCENDENTS OF MOMOTARO?
YOU.
HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW SOMETHING LIKE THAT? AARRGH!
YOU COUNTRY BOY!
TO BE VERY HONEST, NO. I HAVE NO IDEA WHO THAT IS
I..
YEEEESSS!
THAT'S A STORY WHICH TOOK PLACE 150 YEARS AGO
THE LEGENDARY HERO, MOMOTARO, THE FIRST MOMONOSI
EVEN IN THE CAPITAL, I NEVER HEARD ABOUT IT
AND IF YOU ARE FROM THE CAPITAL, YOU SHOULD KNOW!! HAVE YOU NO SHAME?

MOMOTARO WAS BORN INSIDE A PEACH.
HE'S THE LEGENDARY HERO WHO KILLED EVERY OGRE IN ONE FELL SWOOP!
HE SEIZED THE OGRES' TREASURE—
—WHICH BROUGHT PROSPERITY AND CELEBRITY TO THE MOMONOGI FAMILY.
UHH... BABIES COME FROM PEACHES?
IT'S JUST A LEGEND. DON'T TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY.

EVERY YEAR, DURING THE FULL MOON OGRES COME TO ATTACK MY RESIDENCE
FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS, TERRIBLE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED
HOW-EVER

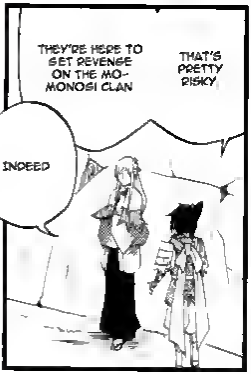

HOHO, I LOVE IT WHEN PEOPLE CATCH ON QUICKLY
IS THAT IT?
SO YOU WANT US TO BE YOUR BODYGUARDS TO PROTECT YOU FROM OGRES?
OGRES?

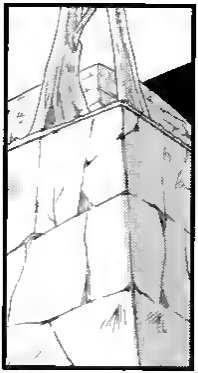
INDEED, THE FIRST MINISTER OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE WILL SOON VISIT US PERSONALLY
I WANT TO RECTIFY THIS PROBLEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
I THOUGHT MY ELITE TROOPS COULD STOP THEM BUT WE REMAIN POWER-LESS AGAINST THEM
EVERY TIME, MY TROOPS FLEE WHEN FACED WITH THE FURY OF THE OGRES

MY TUTOR!

YOU COULD STOP THE OGRES ON THE FIRST TRY. IF YOU SUCCEED, I WILL GIVE YOU A PASSPORT
TONIGHT IS THE FULL MOON WITH SOME LUCK..

I WONDER IF SHE'S DOING WELL..
I PROBABLY WON'T BE ABLE TO TALK TO HER BUT I COULD AT LEAST SEE HER


THEY'RE HERE TO GET REVENGE ON THE MOMONOSI CLAN
THAT'S PRETTY RISKY
INDEED



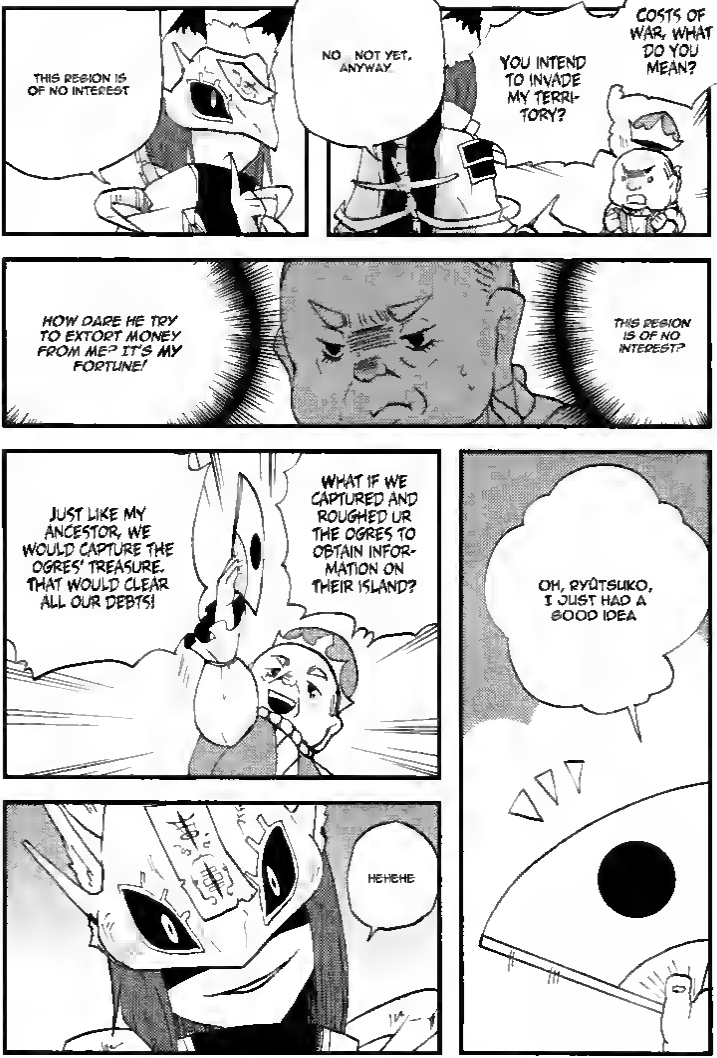
THIS CONVERSATION IS OVER
YOU MAY LEAVE NOW

IT'S JUST A NAME. HOW MANY TIMES DID I HAVE TO CHANGE MINE?
IT'S NOT SAFE FOR US TO REVEAL OUR REAL NAMES TO SOMEONE CLOSE TO THE IMPERIAL FAMILY
I COULDN'T FIND YOU A PROPER NAME
BY THE WAY, WHAT'S WITH THAT CRAPPY NAME YOU GAVE ME?
LET'S SETTLE THIS MATTER QUICKLY AND THEN LEAVE
HOWEVER, WE CAN'T MAKE THE OLD SEIRYUU WAIT FOR TOO LONG
BESIDES, THAT OLD RUNT IS GETTING ON MY NERVES. I DON'T WANT TO DRAG ON OUR STAY HERE
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MY BEAUTIFUL ONIMITAMA *?
HOHO
MY TREASURES ARE SO PRETTY HOHOHO

TL/NOTE: OGRE BALL

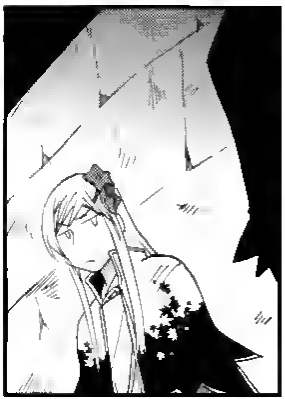
HAVING FUN WITH THE ONIMITAMA, MOMONOSUKE?
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OBJECTION IF I JOIN YOU?
EEK!
RYUTSUKO!
YOU'LL NEVER GET TIRED OF POLISHING SOMETHING THAT ISN'T YOURS, WILL YOU?
SHF
IT BELONGS TO THE OGRES, YOU KNOW

TIME? YOU'VE HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH. I'M SICK OF WAITING
YOU SHOULD KNOW QUITE WELL THAT GATHERING SUCH A SUM REQUIRES SOME TIME.
UHH
DID YOU COME AGAIN TO EXTORT ME?
BUT WE HAD OTHER ISSUES TO RESOLVE IN THE MEAN-TIME
AND YOU PROMISED TO PAY BACK YOUR DEBT, DIDN'T YOU?
THE LAND OF THE DEAD
THANKS TO WHOM DID YOUR FAMILY PROSPER 150 YEARS AGO?
MANY OF MY FRIENDS CONSIDER YOU UNTRUST-WORTHY AND WOULD RATHER END THINGS RIGHT HERE
BECAUSE, YOU SEE, THEY ALSO HAVE IMPORTANT COSTS OF WAR TO PAY AND THEY CAN NO LONGER WAIT


THIS REGION IS OF NO INTEREST
NO... NOT YET, ANYWAY.
YOU INTEND TO INVADE MY TERRITORY?
COSTS OF WAR, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HOW DARE HE TRY TO EXTORT MONEY FROM ME? IT'S MY FORTUNE!
THIS REGION IS OF NO INTEREST?
JUST LIKE MY ANCESTOR, WE WOULD CAPTURE THE OGRES' TREASURE. THAT WOULD CLEAR ALL OUR DEBTS!
WHAT IF WE CAPTURED AND ROUGHED UP THE OGRES TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THEIR ISLAND?
OH, RYŪTSUKO, I JUST HAD A GOOD IDEA
HEHEHE

HERE IS WHAT I WILL OFFER YOU
LONG AGO, YOUR ANCESTORS BEGGED US FOR THIS OBJECT
YOU IMPRESS ME, MY DEAR MOMONOSI
I MUST OFFER YOU SOMETHING FOR YOUR PERSPICACITY
BECAUSE THEY DESIRED POWER
YEP!
THEY CAME TO BEG US
THAT...!
UP TO YOU TO USE IT AT THE RIGHT MOMENT
BE CAREFUL NOT TO WASTE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY
THE PEACH FROM THE LAND OF THE DEAD. IF YOU EAT IT ONCE, IT BRINGS CONSIDERABLE POWER

WE JUST HAVE TO HOPE THIS WILL WORK



I SWITCHED PLACES RELUCTANTLY.
GOT A PROBLEM, SHEMALE?
WHY DID YOU SURFACE?
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKING TO, HUH?
THIS ISN'T YOUR PLACE
WE'LL HUNT OGRES TONIGHT
LET ME TAKE CARE OF IT PLEASE. PLEASE, PLEASE
HUNTING OGRES? COOL!
KATSURAGI-SAMA!
I DON'T KNOW.
OGRES ARE DROOLING AND STINKY, HUH? RIGHT? RIGHT? RIGHT?
NANTOKA-SAMA!

I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM MOMONOSI-SAMA.
YEAH, THAT'S TEMPORARY.
WHAT'S WITH THAT CRAPPY NAME, NANTOKA-SAMA?
ARE YOU THERE?
THERE IS A CHANGE CONCERNING THE MATTER WITH THE OGRES.
HE WANTS YOU TO CAPTURE THEM ALIVE
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU!
WE CAN STILL PUMMEL THEM, EVEN IF WE DON'T KILL THEM?
AS LONG AS YOU DON'T LOSE YOUR COMPOSURE, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY PROBLEM

I WAS HOPING TO TRAIN A BIT AGAINST THE OGRES BUT OH WELL... I FEEL FOR THEM.
THESE TWO DON'T KNOW HOW TO HOLD BACK
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, DON'T WORRY!
YEAH! WE'LL SMASH THEM IN TWO SECONDS!
THEY MUST HAVE A GOOD REASON TO WANT TO TAKE REVENGE AFTER SO LONG.
THE OGRES COME THROUGH THE FOREST WHEN THERE IS A FULL MOON.

KARARAGI, THE NUMBER OF TROOPS INCREASED AGAIN
WHOA!
YEAH, SEEMS LIKE THEY STILL DON'T INTEND TO LET US LEAVE WITH OUR TREASURE...
...OR EVEN LET US LEAVE ALTOGETHER. NO BIG DEAL, WE'LL STILL CHARGE HEAD-FIRST ANYWAY

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There you go! Volume 3 ends here. I hope your enjoyed reading this volume as much as I enjoyed doing it!

And now, time for the extras...

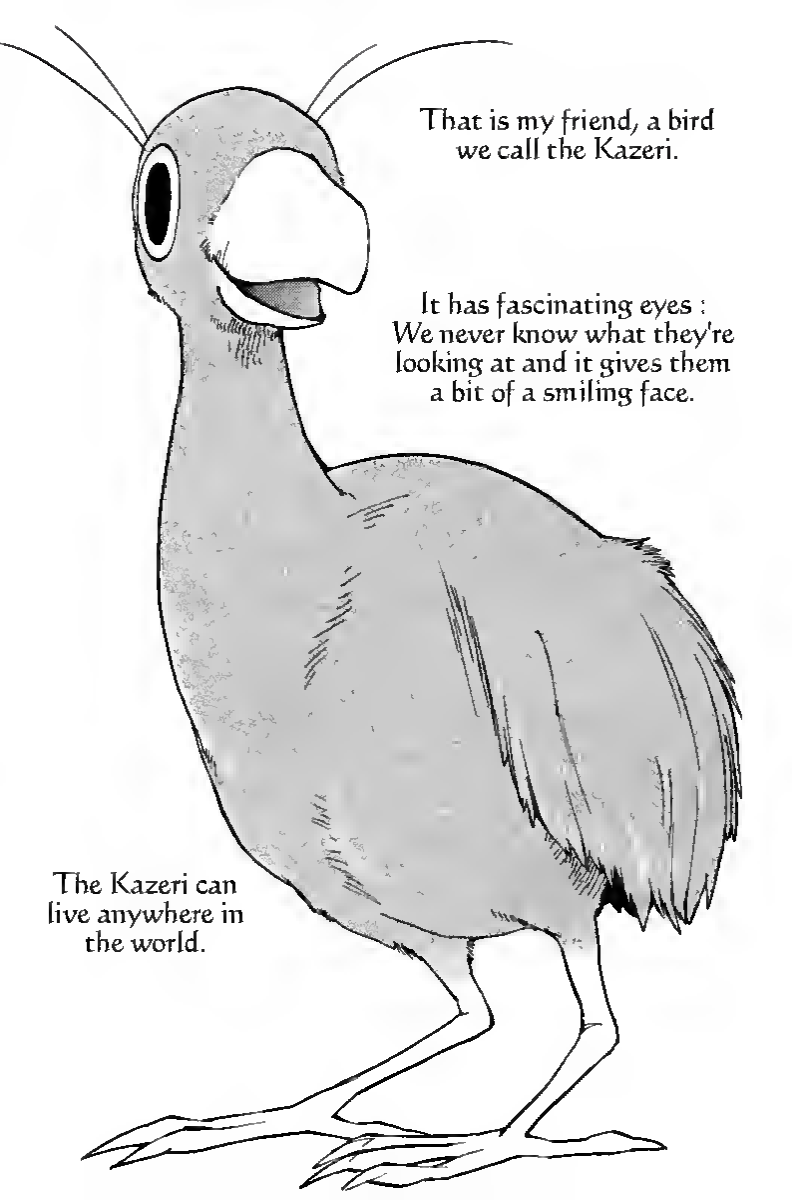
You will find our dear Manashi again, amongst some research, as well as a new chapter on the life of these wonderful little creatures!

I wish you a happy read!

Moa Hato

Unfortunately this is the last volume of this series as it has been discontinued.
The publishing company stopped publishing any more manga although they have switched their operations to webtoons and their site is still active.

Easy Going Scans


That is my friend, a bird we call the Kazeri.
It has fascinating eyes : We never know what they're looking at and it gives them a bit of a smiling face.
The Kazeri can live anywhere in the world.

Our Kazeri friends all have long hair growing above their eyes. Research is underway to try to understand why...

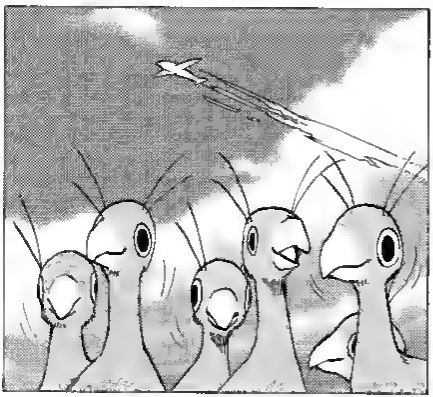
However, it really is a distinctive feature because it is found on every Kazeri, even those with a different morphology.

Their screams are heavy and low-pitched and sound something like this:
"Uhe",
"Uhh, Uhh"
"He He He"

There are also Kazeri who yell with a beautiful and high-pitched voice.

Since their wings have suffered a degeneration, there is practically no more Kazeri species able to fly.
Under their wings, their feathers are soft.
Since their wings cannot bend, the Kazeri keep them close to their body.
When it rains, the children slip under the adults' wings.

The Kazeri move in flocks.



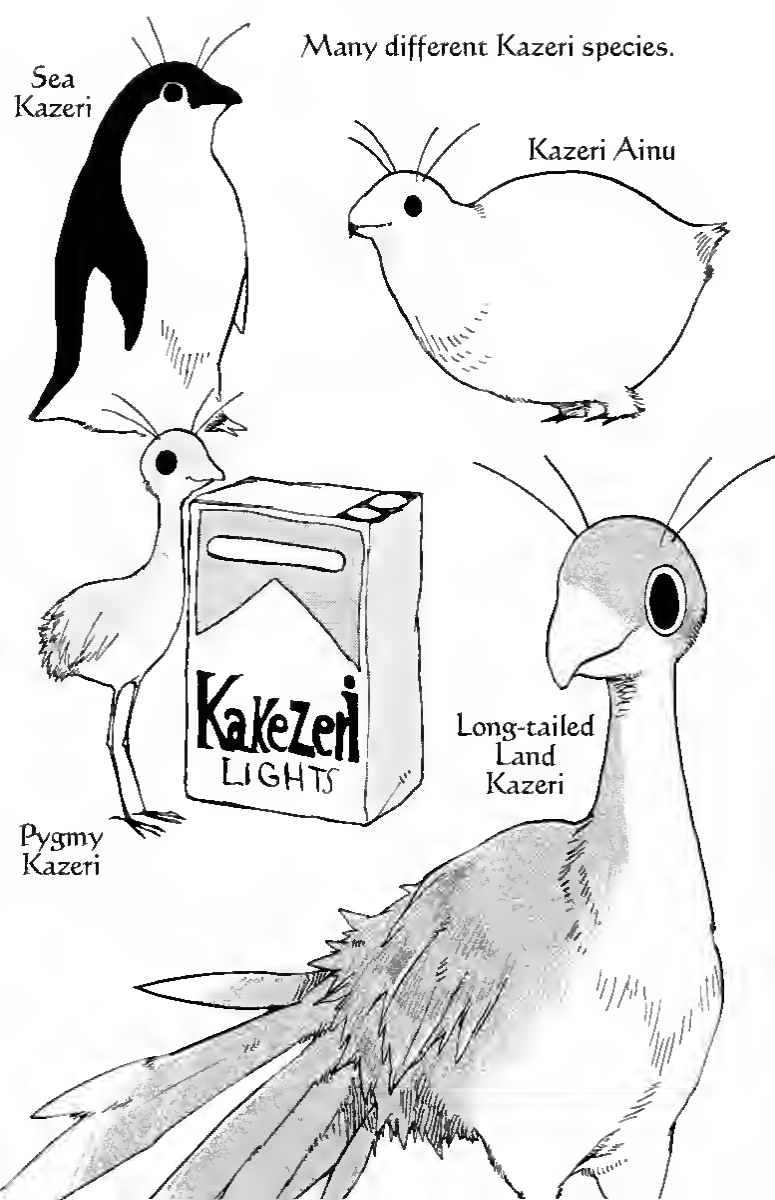
Always in a state of alert.

Thanks to their legs and their long neck, they can easily examine their surroundings.

Since they cannot fly, they run very quickly.

The fledglings are small and their body entirely covered with a yellow and white down.

When they move, the parents carry their babies by grabbing them by the skin of their neck.


Many different Kazeri species.
Sea Kazeri
Kazeri Ainu
KaKeZeri LIGHTS
Pygmy Kazeri
Long-tailed Land Kazeri